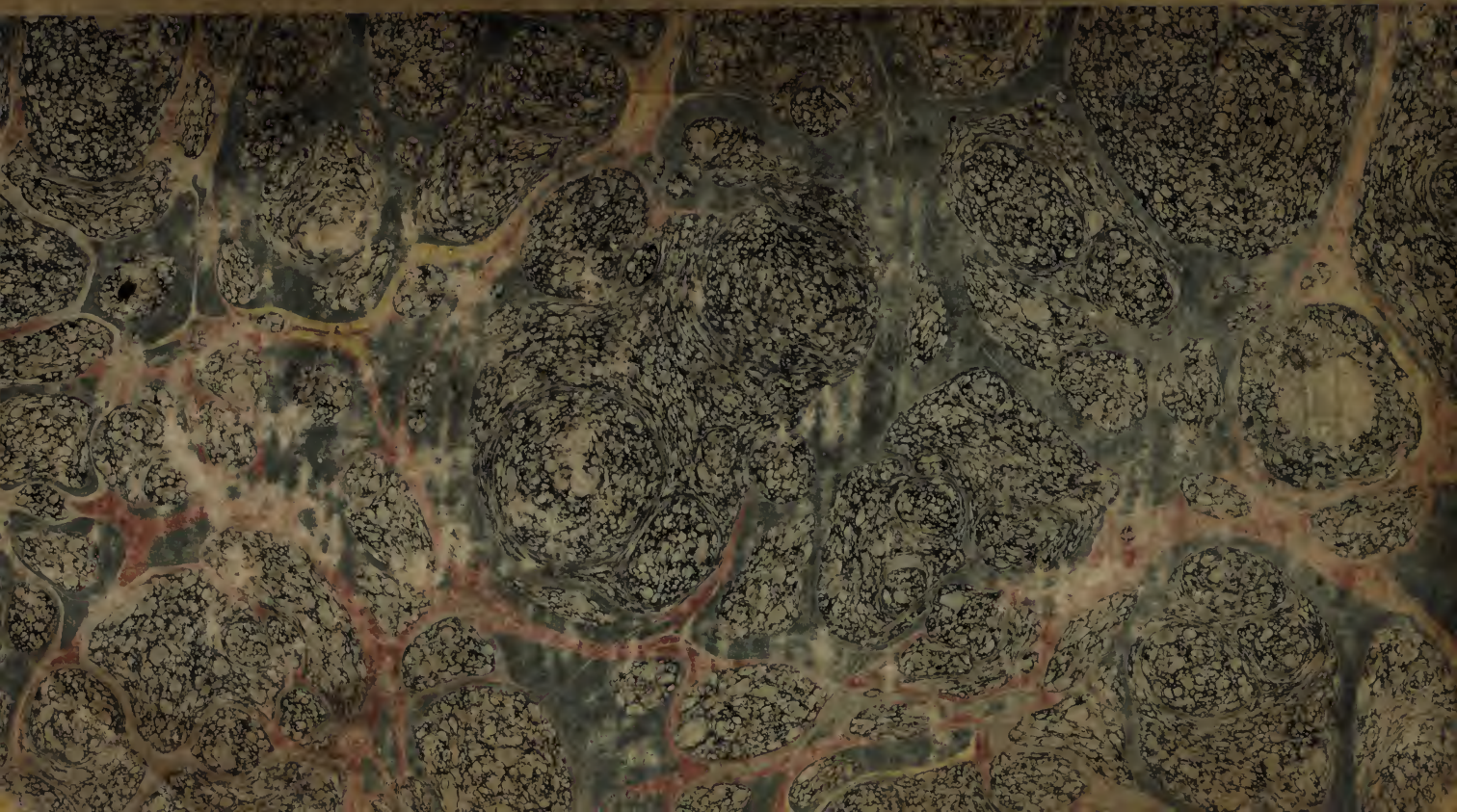

John Edwd Walsh, Q.C. L.L.D.

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ESSAYS

ON THE

POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES

OF

IRELAND,

WRITTEN

DURING THE ADMINISTRATION OF

EARL CAMDEN;

WITH AN

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

THOUGHTS

ON THE

WILL OF THE PEOPLE.

AND A

POSTSCRIPT,

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED.

BY A GENTLEMAN OF THE NORTH OF IRELAND.

Dublin:

PRINTED BY GRAISBERRY & CAMPBELL, BACK-LANE.

1798.

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PREFACE.

THE following Eſſays are republiſhed, becauſe they relate to ſubjects, on which it is of importance to throw every poſſible degree of light, both in order to the preſent reſtoration of tranquillity, and for the purpoſe of future information and inſtruction.

Had the commotions in this country been merely of a local nature, it might appear impertinent to call the attention even of the other parts of the Britiſh Empire to a republication of tracts, whoſe object was, almoſt wholly, to trace thoſe commotions to their ſource. But when the plots and conſpiracies by which Ireland has been af-

flicted are evidently the reſult of a kind of epidemic *Mania*, when the ſame peſtilential principle has operated, and ſtill more or leſs continues to operate in every quarter of Europe and North America, and when Great Britain herſelf, the happieſt of Nations, is not exempt from the contagion, then circumſtances in themſelves local, may become of infinite conſequence, both as ſerving to illuſtrate the nature of the diſeaſe, and as pointing to the moſt effectual methods of counteraction and cure.

Perhaps ſuch a Republication as the preſent, may appear ſuperfluous after ſo full a developement of the principles and tendencies of the IRISH UNION, as has been given in the late Reports of the Secret Committees. But it is to be obſerved that the direct proofs of a treaſonable purpoſe adduced in thoſe important and intereſting collections, ſcarcely go farther back than the year 1795, although the Society of

UNITED

United Irishmen had exiſted for more than three years previous to that period. It may therefore not be uſeleſs to pay ſome additional attention to the earlier ſtage of that aſſociation, in order fully to aſcertain whether the original views of its founders were limited to any thing which could be called Parliamentary Reform, or whether, on the contrary, their deſign was not ſyſtematically traiterous from the firſt moment of their career.

The conſideration of this queſtion becomes the more neceſſary, in conſequence of the attempt made by ſome of the leaders of the United Iriſhmen to juſtify themſelves, even at the moment when they were diſcloſing the moſt complicated villanies. It was then aſſerted by them that, though *Revolutionary Democracy* became at length their object, it had formed no part of their original deſign; that they *then only* had adopted it when their hopes

of obtaining moderate reform were at an end; and that conſequently, the guilt of all which had enſued, belonged wholly to thoſe who by obſtinately rejecting their reaſonable demands, had driven them to deſpair—" It was" ſays Mr. T. A. Emmet, " after they had deſpaired of obtaining a Reform in Parliament by peaceable means, that they ſought to effect a revolution by ſubverting the monarchy, ſeparating this country from Great Britain, and erecting ſuch a Government as might be choſen by the People."

To evince the utter unfoundedneſs of this and every ſimilar aſſertion, is one chief object of the preſent republication. It contains a ſeries of obſervations on the ſpirit and temper of the United Iriſhmen in their earlieſt period, written by a country gentleman, who drew his concluſions from no other ſource than their own avowed declarations, and who took up his pen ſolely in obedience

obedience to the dictates of his reaſon and his conſcience. At no very diſtant period, he had himſelf been a ſincere and zealous advocate for a limited Parliamentary reform; but having always had a juſt abhorrence of the principles and views of the *United Iriſhmen*, and being ſoon convinced of what one of their own oracles afterward acknowledged, that any degree of popular reform, would infallibly lead to every other degree of reform; *i. e.* to complete democracy, he felt it his duty to abandon a purſuit which appeared to him as dangerous as it was viſionary, and to become to the utmoſt of his power an unqualified ſupporter of the exiſting conſtitution.

Under this impreſſion he naturally wiſhed to be the inſtrument of producing in others the ſame conviction of the miſchievous deſigns of the United Iriſhmen which he had himſelf always felt, but now more ſtrongly than ever. They had already diſſeminated through the country ſucceſſive manifeſtoes, which

which he conceived, it was only neceſſary to conſider with attention, in order to collect from them the moſt deciſive proofs of the boldeſt revolutionary purpoſes. A temporary intercourſe with the Convention-politicians of 1792 and 1793 perhaps gave him ſome advantage in underſtanding the vocabulary of Iriſh Jacobiniſm, and enabled him more readily to trace a ſyſtematic connexion between thoſe ſeemingly detached burſts of treaſon with which the writings of the United Iriſhmen abounded, but which, from being generally mingled with a maſs of looſe declamatory matter, might frequently eſcape the obſervation of a common reader. To bring thoſe early ſymptoms of a treaſonable deſign into the full light of day, was accordingly his object in moſt of the following Eſſays.

It will be obſerved from the dates of theſe publications, that the far greater part of them appeared before the actual treaſon of the

the United Iriſhmen had been ſubſtantiated by the Reports of the Secret Committees in Spring 1797, and of courſe while no proof of their real deſigns could be adduced except what might be derived from their own avowed declarations. The reader will, notwithſtanding, judge whether there is not in ſome of the following pages a tolerably juſt developement of the treaſonable principles which were afterwards brought to light; and in ſome degree, an anticipation of thoſe revolutionary expedients which have ſince been carried into practice. But the Author is far from laying claim, on this account, to any uncommon foreſight or any extraordinary ſagacity. He ſaw no more than what any intelligent perſon was competent to have ſeen, had he given the ſame attention to the ſubject, and indeed no more than what numberleſs perſons did actually ſee, though they did not all, like him, communicate their obſervations to the public.

The

The Author therefore ventures to hope that ſuch a republication will not be entirely fruitleſs. If any well diſpoſed perſon can ſtill entertain a doubt with reſpect to the original principles of the United Iriſhmen, he will here find not only the concluſions formed by an unprejudiced obſerver reſpecting that aſſociation, in its earlieſt ſtages, but alſo the reaſonings which led to thoſe concluſions, and the grounds on which they reſted. And the Author truſts, it will be ſeen, that the inferences were not raſh, that the reaſonings were not ſophiſtical, and that the warmth which ſometimes ſhews itſelf, and which increaſed as the ſubject became more practical, was not the rancour of party ſpirit, but the zeal of well-founded reprobation, of anxious indignant humanity.

While thoſe who have but lately opened their eyes to the real views of thoſe execrable diſturbers of the community, may

may perhaps receive new light from the following pages, with reſpect to the primary purpoſes of the Conſpiracy, the Author has the vanity to hope that thoſe who have ſeen and felt as he has done, will not be unwilling to have thoſe thoughts retraced, and thoſe feelings recalled, which in the rapid whirl of events it is poſſible even for the moſt collected minds to loſe ſight of, till they are again brought to their remembrance. And he truſts on the whole, that a conviction will be either produced or confirmed in the mind of every attentive reader, that, notwithſtanding all that may be alleged by men loſt alike to truth and to humanity, no fact can be more eſtabliſhed than that the Society of United Iriſhmen, from the firſt moment of its inſtitution, has been, with reſpect to its leading members, a band of ſyſtematic traitors; that no poſſible means would have been adequate to their ſuppreſſion but the moſt unremitting coercion, and the moſt vigorous reſiſtance; and that no-

thing can be more inſolently falſe than to repreſent them as having been provoked into treaſon by thoſe ſtrong meaſures on the part of Government, which were then only reſorted to when both the common ſenſe and common ſafety of the country irreſiſtibly demanded them.

To theſe objects the following Eſſays were uniformly directed, except when it was thought neceſſary to advert to the proceedings of the allies of the conſpiracy abroad, or to the conduct of thoſe who from an execrable ſpirit of party, and in ſpite of the cleareſt and moſt irrefragable evidence cheriſhed and encouraged it at home.* Theſe, together, make up the whole of the topics introduced. And they are treated either in the way of diſpaſſionate argument, or of plain but warm expoſtulation,

* The firſt ſix Eſſays are chiefly on the ſubjects here mentioned.

expoſtulation, by reaſoning on general principles, or by adduction of acknowledged facts, juſt as appeared moſt ſuitable to the circumſtances of the moment, or to imply the greateſt probability of engaging the attention of the public.

The event to which the firſt Eſſay alludes need ſcarcely be brought to the recollection of any inhabitant of this metropolis, the riot which took place on the day of Lord Camden's arrival in this kingdom; commencing with an outrageous aſſault on the perſons of the Lords Juſtices, and terminating in an attack on the Cuſtom-houſe, in which one wretched man at leaſt, fell a victim to his own folly. The obſervations upon this ſubject are little more than what muſt have occurred at the time to every perſon of ſenſe and candour. Mr. Grattan's *energetic* Addreſs to the Inhabitants of Dublin which appeared juſt before that event, has ſince the date of

this Eſſay, become the ſubject of much more powerful animadverſion. The Author truſts, however, he will be excuſed for republiſhing ſtrictures which were merely ſuggeſted by the honeſt feelings of the moment, and which he conceives have been lamentably juſtified by every event which has ſince occurred in this abuſed and afflicted country. The ſubjects of the other Eſſays are ſo obvious, eſpecially to thoſe who have read the *Reports* of the SECRET COMMITTEES, as to ſuperſede the neceſſity of explanation.

It may perhaps be a matter of ſurprize to ſome readers, that the unfortunate religious differences in this country, are ſo ſlightly touched upon in the following pages, and that when introduced, they are referred to, as a topic made uſe of by a diſappointed faction, rather than as the ground of treaſonable combination. But the dates of the Eſſays will ſufficiently

ſufficiently account for this apparent omiſſion. The lateſt Eſſay in the Collection was written in the month of June 1797: and it will eaſily be recollected that at that period the actual movements of the conſpiracy appeared almoſt excluſively in the province of Ulſter, where no religious motive was ſo much as pretended, and where the Roman Catholics in particular ſeemed diſpoſed to diſtinguiſh themſelves by keeping aloof from combination. It required indeed little foreſight, though it would moſt certainly have anſwered no uſeful end, to have prognoſticated, that when thoſe parts of the kingdom where the bulk of the inhabitants are Romaniſts, ſhould become engaged in the conſpiracy, religious motives would neceſſarily be added to thoſe of a merely political nature; that bigoted Eccleſiaſtics in ſuch circumſtances, would naturally become the buſieſt and moſt pernicious agitators, and that thoſe whoſe minds

were

were inſenſible to the differences between one ſpecies of government and another, would eaſily be wrought upon by the ſuggeſtions of a groſs and intolerant ſuperſtition. But the Author freely acknowledges that he never could have anticipated thoſe horrors by which the blood-hounds of Enniſcorthy and Wexford have added new diſgraces to a religion, whoſe former enormities it would have been infinitely better to have expiated than revived.

Still, however, the Author muſt deem thoſe perſons miſtaken who conceive the Iriſh Union to have been originally a Roman Catholic Plot. He thinks the erroneouſneſs of ſuch a ſuppoſition will fully appear from the following pages. The attentive reader will find ſufficient proof, that the primary object of the United Iriſhmen was ſtrictly and excluſively *Revolutionary Democracy*; and that though from the firſt moment of their inſtitution, they

they regarded the religious diſaffection of the Iriſh Catholics as the chief inſtrument of their deſign, and the ſureſt pledge of their ſucceſs, it was uniformly their object to make Religion ſubſervient to Jacobiniſm, and not Jacobiniſm to Religion. How fatally they might have found themſelves deceived, and how likely they were to have become the victims of their own infernal policy, the events of the late rebellion have ſtrongly evinced; but ſuch is the malignity of the Jacobin Temper, that we cannot doubt but the ſame artifice will be perſevered in, until both the political malecontent and the religious bigot ſhall be obliged to feel the futility of combination as well as the frenzy of reſiſtance.

For accidental inaccuracies of ſtyle and the frequent occurrence of what may be deemed colloquial barbariſms, the Author thinks it needleſs to apologize. It was his wiſh to be intelligible to all; and wherever

wherever he thought it might ſerve an uſeful purpoſe, he willingly preferred familiarity to elegance. Beſides, the papers now collected were intended in almoſt every inſtance for inſertion in Newſpapers, or for circulation in the form of hand-bills; and in ſome caſes the latter part of an Eſſay has been iſſuing from the pen while the former part was in the hands of the Compoſitor. Under theſe circumſtances, if plain ſenſe, conſecutive reaſoning and perſpicuous language were attained, they were the utmoſt which could have been expected. As compoſitions, the Tracts which are here collected, might no doubt have been altered for the better; but the avocations of the author did not allow him ſufficient leiſure; and material alteration would have deſtroyed identity.

Dublin, November
23, 1798.

ERRATA.

Page 15 line 9, for *them*, read *themſelves*.
34 -- 10, for *turn*, read *term*.
53 -- 6, for *to*, read *by*.
58 -- 25, for *or*, read *of*.
71 -- firſt line of Eſſay X. for *your*, read *my*.
73 -- 16, for *it*, read *its*.
74 -- 1, for *ſays*, read *ſay*,
76 -- 12, inſert a comma after *intended*.
77 -- 24, inſert *them* after *made*.
86 -- 3, for *exiſts* read *exiſt*, and inſert a comma after it.
89 -- 16, for *the metropolis*, read *this metropolis*.
93 -- ſtrike out *to*, and inſert a comma in its ſtead.
96 -- 5 inſert *in* before *England*.
110 -- 13 inſert *the* before *maintenance*.
142 -- 11 for *Cataline*, read *Catiline*.
150 -- 7 for *in*, read *is*.
Ib. Note 2 for *it is*, read *is it*.
164 -- 9 ſtrike out the comma after *decreed*.
Ib. -- 18 ſtrike out the comma after *more*.
171 -- 8 for *pretend*, read *preſented*.
225 -- 7 ſtrike out *tocracy*.

ESSAYS

ON THE

POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES

OF

IRELAND.

O! quis, quis volet impias
Cædes & rabiem tollere civicam?
Si quæret pater urbium
Subſcribi ſtatuis, indomitam audeat
Refrænare licentiam,
Clarus poſtgenitis. HOR.

ESSAY I.

APRIL *7th*, 1795.

HAPPILY for myſelf, no doubt, I am placed at a diſtance from political tumult: yet ſtill, from that diſtance I ſometimes take a view of what paſſes in the buſy world; and though perſonally unintereſted in the agitations of the hour, my regard for my fellow-mortals very frequently both fixes my attention and excites my anxiety.

Such being my uſual tendencies, I could not be wholly unconcerned with reſpect to the diſturbance which took place in this city on Tueſday night laſt: It was almoſt at an end, before I knew that it exiſted; and on the following morning I felt no ſmall pleaſure in learning that it had ſubſided with but little damage either to perſons or property, and with ſcarcely the neceſſity of proceeding to extremities.

I am generally diſpoſed to regard the evils of life in the moſt favourable point of view, and to look out for all the alleviating circumſtances that the caſe will afford. I practiſe this ſpecies of philoſophy partly to keep my own mind as eaſy as I can, and partly that I may be able to exerciſe charity towards all mankind with as little interruption as poſſible.

On the late occaſion in particular, I felt no inclination to depart from my uſual plan. I am not a party man, and of courſe had no wiſh either to magnify or diminiſh the exceſſes which had been committed: I was diſpoſed to view them juſt as they were; and in thus conſidering them, inſtead of being ſurpriſed at what had happened, I felt both wonder and a degree of national pride that the buſineſs had terminated with ſo little miſchief: I ſay, I felt wonder and a degree of national pride; and I almoſt think

that

that when my candid readers have made the ſame compariſon which I have been led to make on this occaſion, they will experience pretty nearly the ſame ſenſations.

Who does not recollect the remarkable inſurrection which took place in London in the year 1780, which for four ſucceſſive days cramped the hand of Magiſtracy, and ſpread uncontrouled devaſtation through that great Metropolis? If we compare all the circumſtances of the riot which lately occurred here, with thoſe that attended that other memorable inſtance of popular frenzy, I apprehend we ſhall ſee cauſe to acknowledge that the reſult is highly flattering to the public character of Ireland in general, and of this city in particular.

I am not ſo partial to my Country as to pay it any compliment at the expence of truth; but on the cooleſt conſideration I am perſuaded, that ſo far as the eloquence of a Grattan excels the ravings of a Lord George Gordon, and ſo far as the widely circulated and frequently re-printed manifeſto of the *former* might be conceived more forcible on the inhabitants of this city, than the incoherencies of the *latter* on the populace of London, in preciſely the ſame proportion muſt we feel both ſurpriſe and ſatisfaction that the Dublin mob of the 31ſt of March, 1795,

ſell ſhort ſo amazingly, both in violence and in outrage, of the London mob of the 2d of June, 1780.

Every one knows that Lord George Gordon, had not ſignalized himſelf either by his underſtanding or his talents, and that he was remarkable only for enthuſiaſm and eccentricity; but every one alſo knows that Mr. Grattan is a perſon of acknowledged abilities; that his parliamentary eloquence, though not always approved of by the wiſe, has ſeldom failed to excite the admiration of the multitude; and that his name, while it might have been a moſt valuable auxiliary to the cauſe of true patriotiſm, would almoſt be ſufficient to give, at leaſt in the view of the unthinking many, plauſibility even to the extravagancies of ſedition.

If then the influence of Lord George Gordon was ſuch as to collect a mob, conſiſting of fifty thouſand perſons, and to inſpirit that mob with ſuch frantic violence, that for four days together its courſe through the metropolis of Great Britain was marked with conflagration and ruin, might it not have been juſtly apprehended that when the eloquent, the popular Mr. Grattan, ſuffered himſelf to be tranſported by a paroxyſm, as wild to the full as that of my Lord George,

George, and gave vent to his paſſions in a manner at leaſt equally dangerous—might it not, I ſay, have been feared that an inſurrection would have taken place as tremendous as that of London, and that the conſequent devaſtation would have been equally deplorable?

Whether my Lord George's impaſſioned appeals to the populace are upon record, I cannot at this moment pretend to aſcertain; but if they are, I almoſt dare to ſay that they will be found to contain nothing better fitted to the purpoſe of popular excitation than that which we have read, and which our children's children will read (if it ſhould chance to reach them,) with amazement, in Mr. Grattan's Anſwer to the Roman Catholics of Dublin.

" I conceive," ſaith he, " the continuance of " Lord Fitzwilliam as neceſſary for the proſpe- " rity of the kingdom, &c. &c. For myſelf, the " pangs I ſhould feel on rendering up my ſmall " portion of miniſterial breath would be little, " were it not for the gloomy proſpects afforded " by thoſe *dreadful guardians* who are likely to " *ſucceed.* I tremble at the return to power of " your *old taſk maſters;* that combination, which " *galled* the country by its *tyranny*, and *inſulted* " her by its manners, *exhauſted* her by its *ra-* " *pacity*, and *ſlandered* her by its *malice:* Should " ſuch

" ſuch a combination, at once inflamed as it " muſt be now by the *favour* of the *Britiſh Court*, " and by the *reprobation* of the *Iriſh People*, re- " turn to power, *I have no heſitation to ſay*, that " THEY WILL EXTINGUISH IRELAND, or IRE- " LAND MUST REMOVE THEM. It is not your " cauſe only, but that of the nation. *I find the* " *country already* COMMITTED in the ſtruggle; " I BEG to be COMMITTED *along with her*, and " to abide the iſſues of her fortune."

If theſe words had been addreſſed to the opulent, the enlightened, and the reſpectable Roman Catholicks only, and if the reading and hearing of them had been confined to thoſe excluſively, unjuſtifiable as ſuch expreſſions would ſtill have been in themſelves, poſſibly they might have been productive of little or no danger, becauſe it may be ſuppoſed that opulent Roman Catholicks feel themſelves fully as much intereſted in the peace and good order of the community as any Proteſtants whatever: But let it be obſerved, that this paragraph ſtands in an addreſs to the *Catholicks of Dublin* without exception, or limitation; that it was to fall into the hands of the loweſt as well as the higheſt of that deſcription; and that care was taken that it ſhould be univerſally diſſeminated by the moſt extenſive and frequent publication.

Let

Let me then aſk any reaſonable perſon, what impreſſion theſe words, coming at ſuch a time, under ſo great a name, were likely to make on the numerical majority of thoſe to whom they were addreſſed? I ſay on the numerical majority, for I fear I need not heſitate to aſſume, that in no deſcription whatever, Proteſtant or Catholick, the majority, told by the head, would conſiſt of the enlightened and the reſpectable; and it can be no poſſible affront to ſuppoſe, that as a London mob would neceſſarily be a mob of Proteſtants, ſo a Dublin mob would by an almoſt equal neceſſity be chiefly formed of Roman Catholicks.—The queſtion then is, how were Roman Catholicks of *this* deſcription likely to underſtand Mr. Grattan? The ſubject was ſuch as inevitably to intereſt their feelings, and let the candid reader pronounce whether the language was not ſuch as to rouſe their paſſions almoſt to madneſs?

When the indigent, the ignorant, the inflammable vulgar read or heard of *dreadful Guardians* ſucceeding—of *old Taſk maſters* returning—of *tyranny*, *inſult*, *rapacity*, *ſlander*, *malice*, and above all, when they received that unequivocal aſſurance "THEY WILL EXTINGUISH IRELAND OR IRELAND MUST REMOVE THEM;" what in the name of Heaven muſt have been their apprehenſions? Who in their view would be the dreadful Guardians? Evidently thoſe who were to ſucceed

ſucceed Lord Fitzwilliam. Who the old taſk-maſters? Thoſe of courſe who had been in power before Lord Fitzwilliam took poſſeſſion of the government. And what was to be done with theſe? Why, *Ireland muſt* REMOVE *them, or they would* EXTINGUISH *Ireland.* What then, on the whole, was it poſſible for them to conclude, but that on a new Chief Governor attempting to land in the country they ought to riſe in a maſs, and by one grand effort rid themſelves of all thoſe whom they were taught to conſider as obnoxious to them, either in the name of expulſion or of *extermination*? An inflamed multitude would be little apt to enquire whether the word *remove* meant the one or the other.

Now, could my Lord George Gordon, or could indeed any *Enragé* that ever exiſted have taken a more promiſing method of preparing the popular mind for inſurrection? And all things conſidered, is it not, as I have already obſerved, a matter both of ſurprize and ſatisfaction, that the riot of Tueſday terminated with ſo little miſchief, and that on that occaſion the impaſſioned mob did not actually do their beſt to hurl Lord Camden the Lords Juſtices, and all that appeared connected with the commencing government, into the bay of Dublin, as *that* at the moment might naturally have occurred as the ſhorteſt and moſt effectual mode of *removing* them?

Hitherto

Hitherto I have traced the ſimilarity between the conduct of my Lord George Gordon and Mr. Grattan: It is but fair now to touch upon one or two particulars in which the reſemblance does not hold; and this, having already exceeded my intended limits, I ſhall do as briefly as poſſible.

In the firſt place then, Lord George Gordon was actually inſane: Of this his whole ſucceeding life was a continued demonſtration; and though this circumſtance did not leſſen the miſchief, it certainly furniſhed a ſtrong apology for the unfortunate inſtigator. But in the preſent caſe this apology ſeems to be wanting; it does not appear that Mr. Grattan is inſane, except ſo far as "anger is a ſhort madneſs."

In the next place, it is evident that the generally diſordered fancy of poor Lord George was then ſpecially haunted with ſtrange chimeras of the danger which was likely to ariſe from the relaxation of the Popery laws, and which he conceived could only be prevented by the multitude having recourſe to the *ſacred duty* of inſurrection. But it does not appear that Mr. Grattan was tormented by any ſimilar apprehenſions; for at the moment he is ſtimulating the multitude to rid themſelves of their oppreſſors, he expreſsly declares, "Your emancipation will paſs;

rely upon it, your emancipation muſt paſs." Why Mr. Grattan ſhould therefore, in the midſt of all this certainty of ſucceſs, uſe a language which deſpair itſelf would not have juſtified—why, when by his own acknowledgment the Roman Catholicks had ſtill ſo fair a proſpect, he, their friend and advocate, ſhould thus like

> " Cæſar's ſpirit ranging for revenge,
> " With *Ate* by his ſide, come hot from hell—
> " Cry havock, and let ſlip the dogs of war,"

ingenious men may conjecture, but I ſhall not pretend to decide.

The third and laſt inſtance of diſſimilarity is, that my Lord George in his own proper perſon, headed the fifty thouſand men who had aſſembled at his call. Thus, he did ſomething more than merely *beg to be committed*; he actually and *bona fide, committed himſelf.* What Mr. Grattan's preciſe meaning might have been in the requeſt he makes to be *committed with his Country*, I preſume not to aſcertain: But I certainly ſhould not wonder if moſt of thoſe whom he addreſſed conſidered it as an actual engagement to appear with them on the day of enterpriſe. How far their diſappointment in this particular tended to damp their courage, I do not enquire; becauſe,

cauſe, as I have already intimated, I wiſh rather to aſcribe the limitedneſs of the miſchief to the radical good-nature of my countrymen.

ESSAY II.

REMARKS ON

LORD FITZWILLIAM's STATEMENT

OF THE

DISPOSITIONS OF THE IRISH CATHOLICS.

April 21, 1795.

"GOD preſerve me," ſaid ſome one, "from "my friends, and I will preſerve myſelf from "my enemies." The general juſtneſs of the ſentiment I ſhall not contend for; but I conceive the Iriſh Catholicks might on the preſent occaſion adopt ſuch an ejaculation as fairly as any other perſons upon earth.

That my Lord Fitzwilliam meant to ſerve the Roman Catholics, is indiſputable; and yet it might perhaps be aſſerted, that his Lordſhip has

actually done more to defeat the completion of their wiſhes than their bittereſt opponents could have done, either in Great Britain or Ireland.

Many of my readers will be apt to conſider this as a very bold paradox: But if they will do me the favour to attend coolly and diſpaſſionately to what I have to offer, they will probably ſee cauſe to alter their opinion.

In order to avoid all poſſible diſpute, I ſhall adhere to my Lord Fitzwilliam's own account: From this I learn, that when he parted from his friends in the Engliſh Cabinet, he conceived them diſpoſed to grant to the Iriſh Catholicks thoſe privileges which had been withheld from them, as ſpeedily as could be deemed conſiſtent with the common ſafety of the country: But it ſeems, that when on his arrival here, he urged upon the Britiſh Miniſters the neceſſity of carrying this deſign into immediate execution; they, after ſome time, objected to, and at length became totally averſe from, the meaſure: A diſagreement of courſe took place, which terminated, as we all know, in Lord Fitzwilliam's removal, and a total change in the Government of Ireland.

Whether the Britiſh Cabinet had or had not any private reaſons for this apparent alteration, or whether any thought might have ſubſequently ſprung up in their minds, which did not occur

cur to them at the firſt view of the buſineſs, I pretend not to determine; but I am inclined to think, that if the Cabinet Miniſters did indeed change their opinion, they had abundant reaſon ſo to do from the very communications made to them by Lord Fitzwilliam himſelf, after his acceſſion to the Iriſh Viceroyalty.

His Lordſhip gives ſo minute an account of what paſſed between him and his Britiſh Correſpondents, as to put us into complete poſſeſſion of the whole tranſaction. He told them that the danger of delay was "*great* and *imminent*;" that the general wiſh was "*not to be reſiſted*;" that to reſiſt it wholly would imply *the* "*certainty of the moſt alarming and fatal conſequences*;" and more than once he aſſerts, that "he *trembled about the Catholicks, and that* "*he had great fears about keeping them quiet for* "*the Seſſion.*"

It will ſcarcely be aſſerted, that the Engliſh Miniſters on receiving the communications of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland were bound to acquieſce, at all events, in whatever was propoſed to them.—It will rather be allowed that it was their duty, as the confidential ſervants of the King, to take into conſideration the ſtatements which they received, to exerciſe their judgment upon them, and to give the anſwer which appeared to them moſt reaſonable.

May

May I then, be allowed to aſk what objects, on ſuch an occaſion, ought they to have had in view—what enquiries might they have been expected to make—and by what conſiderations ſhould they have been determined? Will any perſon ſay that it would have been unfair for them to have aſked what uſe the Catholicks of Ireland were likely to make of the power they were ſo anxious to obtain; whether it was probable that when poſſeſſed of that power, they would uſe it liberally and diſcretely for the common good; or whether it might not be apprehended that they would make it the inſtrument of obtaining a political aſcendency for themſelves, to the prejudice of their fellow countrymen? And ſurely no candid man will diſpute that the determination of the Cabinet on the point in queſtion ought to have depended on the reſult of ſuch an enquiry.

Now let the unprejudiced reader aſk his own reaſon, how, in ſuch an inveſtigation, my Lord Fitzwilliam's ſtatement *ought* to have operated? The amount of it was evidently neither more nor leſs than this, that the Iriſh Catholicks were determined *at all events* to gain their point; that in the apprehenſion of the Viceroy they were irreſiſtible by the Iriſh Government; and that if they were not gratified, the conſequences would be moſt alarming and fatal; moſt probably *rebellion*

bellion in one country, *and the moſt ſerious calamities to both.*

Had the Britiſh Miniſtry been conſcious, that the ſtrength of the empire was ſo far exhauſted as to make it neceſſary for the Government to accede to all poſſible propoſitions, and to give a *carte blanche* to every ſort of claimant, in that caſe I confeſs even heſitation might have been impolitic. But if they ſtill found them ſtrong enough to exerciſe their reaſon, might they not naturally enough have doubted whether the gratification of the Catholicks would be warrantable, while their diſpoſitions were ſo unpromiſing?—Would it have been unreaſonable for them to have ſaid—" If the Iriſh Catholicks " diſcover a turbulent ſpirit *now* while they are " ſeeking power, will they not be yet more " turbulent when they ſhall have attained it? " If they threaten while in a ſtate of comparative " weakneſs, what will they not aim at when they " ſhall have arrived at maturity of ſtrength? If " we concede to them in their preſent temper, " will they not attribute their ſucceſs to the ter- " ror which they have inſpired? And inſtead of " being grateful will they not become more " haughty—inſtead of being contented, will " they not meditate new demands? And will " they not be encouraged to preſs every demand, " however unreaſonable, on the ſuppoſition that " their ſtrength is irreſiſtible?"

That

That the Britiſh Miniſtry did really argue in this manner I pretend not to aſſert, but if they did, I conceive it would be hard to prove that ſuch reaſoning was at all contrary to common juſtice or common ſenſe. Let the reader ſuppoſe himſelf for a moment in the place of the Duke of Portland or of any other Miniſter in his Majeſty's Cabinet Council, and then ſay, whether on conſidering the queſtion in the light of Lord Fitzwilliam's communications, he would not have been led to form a preciſely ſimilar concluſion?

It is an axiom in politicks, that Governments, if ſtrong enough to maintain their ground, ought never to yield to intimidation; becauſe, a Government acting from fear of the governed is in effect a Government no longer; it is a contradiction in terms, a radical abſurdity. A Government then only performs its functions legitimately, when it acts from *reaſon*; but when *fear* predominates, *reaſon* is ſuſpended; and when a Government acts from fear of that very force, the regulating and due reſtraining of which, is its chief end and deſign, it is to all intents and purpoſes deſtroyed: We might as well conceive the idea of a man alive and dead at one and the ſame moment, as that of a regular Government, determined in its conduct by the menaces of the multitude. That a Government ought ever to liſten and to yield to *reaſon*

I moſt

I moſt readily grant; but in the preſent caſe, if my Lord Fitzwilliam's ſtatement be correct, the Roman Catholicks ſcarcely condeſcended to reaſon at all: Heretofore they had reaſoned, and when they reaſoned, they had been ſucceſsful; but now it ſeems they preferred the more cogent argument. They had not as yet with reſpect to their new demands, tried the event of a petition either to the legiſlature or to the Crown; and yet, ſays my Lord Fitzwilliam, "I have great fears about keeping them quiet during the Seſſion."

But beſides the general impolicy of a government yielding to intimidation, there was another conſideration in the preſent caſe, which I truſt many even amongſt the Roman Catholics themſelves will allow to be worthy of attention—I mean the ſecurity of the Iriſh Proteſtants. It ſurely will not be diſputed, that the Britiſh Cabinet was bound in reaſon and in juſtice to take the ſafety of theſe into the account, and conſequently that it was fair to enquire in what manner they might be affected, by conceding in the preſent inſtance. Let it be obſerved that what I have to ſay upon this point, I do not wiſh to be applied to Catholick Emancipation in the abſtract. Such a meaſure, brought about by the ſilent but reſiſtleſs energy of good ſenſe and growing benevolence, both on the one ſide and on

the other, and under circumſtances which would furniſh a reaſonable ſecurity againſt any dangerous predominance of the more numerous party, would, I conceive, be quite a different matter from what we have now to conſider. I ſpeak of Emancipation only as obtained by the motives which it is clear Lord Fitzwilliam chiefly dwelt upon in his correſpondence with the Engliſh Cabinet, I mean thoſe of *menace* and *alarm*. And from Roman Catholick Emancipation ſo obtained, I muſt ſay, that the Proteſtants of this kingdom had every thing to apprehend.

It is no affront to the Iriſh Catholicks to ſuppoſe that they are but men; but more than men they muſt be, if after having gained their point by intimidating the Miniſtry in England, they would have reſted ſatisfied with any thing ſhort of abſolute aſcendency in Ireland. Heaven knows I bear the ſincereſt good will towards the Iriſh Catholicks, but I cannot give them credit for what is not in human nature. Like all other bodies of men that ever exiſted, they muſt be under the influence of that potent principle, which has not unfitly been called the *Eſprit du Corps*; they muſt even in their mildeſt temper, and under the moſt conciliating circumſtances, deſire not merely equality but ſuperiority for their own party, and would neceſſarily conſider

as

as rivals, thoſe who ſhould ſeem to ſtand in their way to that attractive pre-eminence.

If then, the Catholick body ſhould come into full political power, with the perſuaſion that they were indebted for every thing to their own force, and to the apprehenſions of thoſe who had yielded to them, in the name of Heaven where could they be ſuppoſed to ſtop? Would they not conclude that when the Engliſh Government found it hopeleſs to reſiſt them, the Iriſh Proteſtants lay at their mercy—that their acknowledged irreſiſtibility entitled them to every thing they might wiſh to demand; that they were *de facto* as well as *de jure*, the *Sovereign People*, and that the reſt of the inhabitants of Ireland were ſo far from being entitled to ſhare in the political power of it, that they were bound to do ſuit and ſervice for their very exiſtence?

ESSAY III.

REMARKS ON

LORD FITZWILLIAM's STATEMENT

OF THE

DISPOSITIONS OF THE IRISH CATHOLICKS,

CONTINUED.

APRIL 30, 1795.

IN a former paper I pointed out the inferences moſt likely to be drawn by the Britiſh Miniſtry from Lord Fitzwilliam's ſtatement of the temper of the Iriſh Roman Catholicks: and I attempted to prove that the very reaſons which he aſſigned why they ſhould be immediately gratified, viz. the irreſiſtibility of the general wiſh, and the calamities to be apprehended if it was not inſtantly complied with, were ſufficient, on every ground, except that of conſcious weakneſs, to determine the Cabinet againſt an acquieſcence in his Lordſhip's requiſition.

To

To the obſervations which I then offered, I apprehend there can be but one poſſible objection,—that his Lordſhip's expreſſions admit of a milder interpretation, and that they do not neceſſarily convey the idea of an intended reſort to force on the part of the Catholicks, if their wiſhes were not gratified.

I ſhould be ſorry to attribute to my Lord Fitzwilliam's expreſſions any other than their fair and obvious ſenſe; but if any doubt could ariſe, his Lordſhip has himſelf anticipated it, by fixing his own meaning beyond the poſſibility of miſconception. "I refuſed" ſays he ("Second Letter, page 17th) "to be the perſon "to raiſe a flame in the country that *nothing* "*ſhort of arms could keep down*;" and again, (page 24th) ſpeaking of the Britiſh Miniſtry he ſays, "rather than indulge me they muſt boldly "face, I had almoſt ſaid the CERTAINTY of "driving this kingdom into a REBELLION, and "open another breach for ruin and deſtruction "to break in upon us." Now let the intelligent reader compare theſe paſſages with thoſe quoted in the laſt paper, and then ſay whether it is poſſible to give to his Lordſhip's words any other meaning than this, that in his opinion, the Iriſh Roman Catholicks were determined at all events to have the extent of their demands; and that the

the only alternative was, full Emancipation or general Inſurrection.

Whether the Roman Catholicks really authorized his Lordſhip thus to enforce their claims by the menaces of rebellion, they themſelves beſt know; but if they indeed entertained the ſentiments which he aſcribes to them, if they harboured even the remoteſt intention of reſorting to force for the purpoſe of obtaining the objects they had in view, what eſtimate are we to form either of their wiſdom or their patriotiſm?

That the Iriſh Roman Catholicks ſhould like other frail mortals, be ambitious of political power, that they ſhould wiſh for place and patronage, and that the orators of their Body, ſhould prefer the majeſtic theatre of the Commons houſe of parliament to the limited area of a Francis-ſtreet Chapel, is the moſt natural thing in the world. But that in order to obtain theſe objects, they ſhould riſque their own happineſs, and that of the nation; hazard, as my Lord Fitzwilliam has ſaid, *the moſt alarming and fatal conſequences*, and endanger (as he expreſſed it) *the very exiſtence of the country*—this I ſcruple not to aſſert would be a procedure unmatched as yet even in the hiſtory of revolutions, and in which it might be difficult to ſay whether guilt or madneſs would moſt predominate.

Bodies

Bodies of men are no leſs bound by the great laws of moral obligation than individuals; nor is a crime the leſs atrocious becauſe it is perpetrated by a multitude. We ſhould ſhudder at the infernal malevolence of that man who would deliberately ſet fire to the houſe of his next door neighbour, merely becauſe the latter on grounds which to him ſeemed juſtifiable, delayed the payment of an alleged debt. But what would be the guilt of ſetting a hundred houſes on fire, compared with the wilful enkindling of the infinitely more dreadful flame of inteſtine war? Let me farther aſk, what is there in the circumſtances of the Iriſh Roman Catholicks at this day, which could juſtify in the ſight of God or man, the ſacrifice of a ſingle life?

I acknowledge that reſiſtance to Rulers may, in certain circumſtances, be juſtifiable; but it can only be ſo in extreme caſes, and even then it is a deſperate remedy. To the vagabond and the deſperado; to human wolves and tigers, whoſe appetite is rapine, and whoſe delight is devaſtation, it may doubtleſs afford an alluring proſpect; and it may not want attractions for the dark demagogue who hates power in all hands but his own, and who devoutly wiſhes that the rabble may rule, becauſe he hopes and truſts that he ſhould rule the rabble. But to the ſocial and humanized man, to the induſtrious and well regulated citizen, reſiſtance will ever be the ob-

ject

ject of horror; and then only will he be compelled to think of it, when Government directly counteracts the original ends of ſociety, when there is no rational hope of redreſs in the uſe of milder expedients, and when perſonal liberty, domeſtic tranquillity and ſecurity of property, muſt either be contended for, or loſt.

But are theſe the circumſtances of the Roman Catholics of Ireland? Are their perſons or their properties leſs ſecure than thoſe of the Proteſtants? Have they not the ſame benefit of law, the ſame reward of induſtry, the ſame civil privileges in every reſpect with the reſt of their countrymen? And is there a ſingle burthen which either is, or can be impoſed upon them, without equally affecting all the other members of the community? Where then is the inſufferable grievance? Why, merely this, one in twenty thouſand of them cannot have the full gratification of his ambition! And is it for this—to gratify this ambition, or rather to obtain the bare poſſibility of its gratification,* that the huſbandman ſhould leave his farm, the manufacturer relinquiſh his implements, the merchant forſake his count-

* "Except Parliament" ſays one of the Orators of Francis-ſtreet, "it" (that is, the wiſhed for Emancipation,) "would confer nothing "but *eligibility*; your meaſure" adds he, "would be taken, no doubt, for "certain poſts and employments; but you might remain for ever with-"out filling any of them, from the higheſt to the loweſt, unleſs Go-"vernment was pleaſed to appoint you."—*Doctor Ryan's Speech at Francis-ſtreet Chapel.*

counting-houſe, and all ruſh forward into incalculable devaſtation and ſlaughter? Is it for this, that they ſhould ſtake their own and their country's happineſs in that deſperate game of blood, the only certain reſult of which would be ruin—wide ſpread, laſting, perhaps remedileſs ruin?

That the body of the Roman Catholics either did or could entertain ſuch intentions, I cannot poſſibly believe. Could I admit ſuch an opinion, I muſt ſuppoſe them under a diabolical influence, like that of the poſſeſſed animals in the Goſpel, which "ruſhed violently down a ſteep place into the ſea, and periſhed in the waters." But it is evident that ſuch were the apprehenſions of my Lord Fitzwilliam; and if ſo, on what principle could he bring himſelf to take a ſtep, of all others the moſt likely to realize the miſchief which he dreaded? If the ſpirit of the country was as inflammable as he conceived, could any expedient have been deviſed more directly calculated to make the flame burſt forth, than the publiſhing and diſſeminating of ſuch repreſentations? The private communication of them to the Britiſh Cabinet, when his Lordſhip ſuppoſed them to be founded, might have been a duty; but the ſending them abroad amongſt the very perſons about whom he was *trembling*, and of whoſe *quietneſs* he deſpaired, was little ſhort of an act of madneſs. Granting that he was con-

vinced of the turbulent ſpirit of thoſe Roman Catholicks with whom he and his friends had correſponded, ſtill it was poſſible that the inſanity was not univerſal, and that ſome happy accident might have obſtructed its general progreſs. But could any means have been thought of, more effectual to defeat ſuch a hope, than for ſuch a Perſonage as my Lord Fitzwilliam to proclaim to all the Roman Catholics in the Nation, that he deemed at once their purpoſe to be deſperate and their wiſh irreſiſtible? Of the intention of Lord Fitzwilliam, I ſay nothing, his private character ſecures him from the ſlighteſt imputation of malevolence, and he has too great a ſtake in this country not to be intereſted in its fate: But of the act itſelf, by whatever means his lordſhip was betrayed into it, can we ſay leſs, than that it was in effect, to light up the Beacons of Inſurrection—to ſound the Tocſin of Rebellion?

And here it is impoſſible to omit obſerving, that his Lordſhip, in the opinion he formed of the diſpoſitions of the Iriſh Catholics, could not have depended ſolely on his own judgment. We are warranted in concluding, that he neither acted nor ſpoke without the concurrence of thoſe in this country, whom he honoured with his confidence; and that conſequently in the ſtatements he made to the Britiſh Cabinet, he delivered

vered their ſentiments as well as his own. We know that Mr. Grattan in particular, was one of his moſt confidential friends, and that on the Catholic queſtion their views were one and the ſame. But if Mr. Grattan was really of opinion that the Roman Catholicks of Ireland entertained the ſentiments which my Lord Fitzwilliam attributed to them, in what light are we to conſider his well-known Anſwer to their Addreſs? My Lord Fitzwilliam *trembled about the Roman Catholicks*, deſpaired of *keeping them quiet*, and deemed their wiſh *irreſiſtible*; and Mr. Grattan, his confidant, his ſecond-ſelf, ſays to thoſe very Roman Catholicks, "If ſuch a combination re-"turn to power, I have no heſitation in ſaying "they will extinguiſh Ireland, or Ireland muſt "remove them—it is not your cauſe only, but "that of the Nation; I find the country already "committed in the ſtruggle, I beg to be com-"mitted along with her." Did Mr. Grattan ſuppoſe my Lord Fitzwilliam's ſtatements to be juſt, and yet did he ſpeak thus? Did he believe the country to be ſo very combuſtible, and did he thus deliberately caſt a firebrand into the midſt of it? Was it patriotiſm which could impel him to this? Was it the pure love of his country which induced him to "appeal to the "latent and ſummary powers of the people," at a moment when, in the opinion of his Noble Friend, the public temper was ſuch, as to ha-

zard *the very exiſtence of that country?* Or was it the rage of diſappointment, the diſappointment of that high-raiſed ambition, which, could it only have combined Catholick *irreſiſtibility* with its own Ariſtocratic influence, might have hoped to preſcribe laws to the Legiſlature, and to hurl defiance at the Throne?—Gracious Heaven! what would have been the ſituation of this abuſed kingdom, if the calculation of the popular temper had been as founded, as the appeal to it was frantick?

ESSAY IV.

DEMOCRATIC LIBERTY CONSIDERED.

MAY 4, 1795.

THE Revolution in the Dutch provinces bore at firſt a very mild and gentle appearance. It ſeemed as if Democracy had parted with its teeth and claws before it had viſited the Hollanders; and that it was diſpoſed to recommend itſelf to all Europe as a quiet inoffenſive ſort of beaſt that might be ſtroked and careſſed without any hazard whatever.

But

But it appears at length that this ſeeming innocence was the mere purring of a tyger. The locks of the democratic Sampſon have grown, and he ſhakes the temple over the heads of thoſe who were mad enough to admit him. The packets of laſt week announce that the Revolutionary Government of that *emancipated* country has juſt iſſued an edict, enjoining all who are poſſeſſed of *gold or ſilver uncoined*, to deliver it up forthwith to thoſe who act in the name of the Sovereign People. By *gold* and *ſilvered uncoined*, it is ſcarcely neceſſary to obſerve muſt be meant *plate* of all ſorts, and perhaps watches, buckles, buttons, trinkets, with the whole tribe of *Etceteras* which are uſually made of thoſe precious metals.

Now, ſuppoſe we in this country were thus called upon—in ſuch a caſe the rich would not be the only ſufferers; every induſtrious man and woman who had been ſucceſsful in buſineſs, and whoſe wiſh for decency had led them to lay out a part of their ſavings in decorating a tea or dining table, would in their ſeveral degrees be ſubjected to the general pillage.

But would the good people of Ireland like ſuch a ſweeping confiſcation? Would the laborious mechanick and the thrifty houſewife, who have hitherto felt a virtuous pride in being able

to

to diſplay to their neighbours at a holiday treat the ſhining tokens of their frugality and independence, and who have marked with ſecret delight the eyes of their cuſtomers attracted by the ſplendour of their glazed buffet; would they, I ſay, ſubmit willingly to be ſtripped of their little hoard, by the hard hand of authority, whether of a King or a Republick?

But methinks I hear a neighbour aſk, what ſignifies gold or ſilver compared with Liberty? But ſay I, what ſignifies Liberty if a man's ſilver ſpoons are not ſafe in his cupboard? For my part, I can form no idea of Liberty ſeparate from ſecurity of perſons and property; and I cannot help thinking that if my candleſticks are taken off my table, or my cup ſnatched from my lips, ſhould either happen unfortunately to be of ſilver, it would be much the ſame thing to me whether it were done by an exciſe-officer, a national guard, or a common houſe-breaker.

Governments were inſtituted for the protection of ſociety; that a man may ſit ſecurely in his houſe, and go along the road without being knocked down; that the induſtrious may labour without moleſtation, and may enjoy his acquiſitions without being plundered: theſe are the rational ends of Government; when they are anſwered, Government is a publick good, and has

has a right to publick ſupport. But *that* is a bad Government which not only gives no protection, but actually exiſts by preying on the decencies and innocent gratifications of civilized life.

Kingly Governments have, no doubt, been frequently oppreſſive; but when *they* oppreſs, they do not oblige their people to call that oppreſſion *Liberty:* this adding of inſult to injury is the peculiar glory of Revolutionary Governments. When Lord Peter, in the *Tale of a Tub*, cut a large ſlice off a brown-George loaf, and handed it to his hungry brothers, we are told he uſed to ſay to them, "Look ye, gentlemen, this is "mutton—excellent mutton, and if you don't "call it mutton, you'll be damn'd eternally." But Revolutionary Liberty beats my Lord Peter all to nothing; what he gave to his brothers was ſtill ſomething they could eat; if it was not juſt what he called it, it was food, it was not poiſon. But Democracy, as far as we have yet witneſſed its good offices, gives, inſtead of Bread, a Stone; inſtead of a Fiſh a Serpent, and inſtead of an Egg it offers a Scorpion. Nor is this all, for when the Serpent bites, or the Scorpion ſtings, the wretched victims muſt not ſo much as whimper; when they are robbed and plundered, and ſtript, if they do not wiſh to loſe their lives as well as their ſubſtance, they muſt ſtill ſhout *Liberty! Liberty!*

So

So much for the firſt ſteps of Emancipation in Holland:—Let us now ſee what they may look to hereafter, as a compenſation for the ſtripping of their ſideboards. And who will pretend to ſay, that the Dutch will not have their full ſhare of all the happineſs the French have obtained; or that the Tree of Liberty will not bear as rich fruit amongſt the former, as it has done amongſt the latter? But what *are* the fruits which France has gathered off the Tree of Liberty? What advantages does it appear to have gained from its Revolution? To be informed on this head, we will have recourſe to a ſure quarter, remote from the influence of a Court, or Miniſter; we will go to a well-known Oppoſition Paper, the *Courier*, publiſhed in London on the 23d of laſt month, in the third column of the third page of which, we find a Speech relative to the preſent State of France, delivered by one *Pelet*, on the 8th day of the ſame month in the National Convention.

" For theſe five years paſt, (ſays Pelet) the " people who deſire to be happy have been " *duped* by *words*; for five years paſt they have " been *oppreſſed* and *ſeverely ſmarted:* Let us no " longer adjourn our duty, and their rights for " *ambition* and *crime*, ignorance and famine will " not ceaſe to ſpread their devaſtation. The " erroneous ſyſtem of our political œconomy is

" the

" the ſource of all our ſufferings—our *manufac-*
" *tures languiſh, our maritime trade is deſtroy-*
" *ed*; whilſt our victories render us illuſtrious,
" and conſolidate our power abroad, *diſorder*
" *ſhakes the very foundations of ſociety at home.*"

Now what is this? is it national happineſs? is it a thing worth fighting for, worth riſking every thing valuable for? Is it a juſt and adequate return for all the human blood which has been ſhed in the purſuit of it? And can Holland hope for any thing better? At preſent it is under a French Government; that French Government has begun its career with robbery; and as to what is likely to ariſe from it in the ſequel, let us liſten to Pelet in another part of the ſame ſpeech.

" If, " ſays he," you delay treating with Hol-
" land, if you continue occupying that country
" as a conqueſt, Commerce will fly from that
" Republick. You will annihilate that beauti-
" ful creation of human induſtry; in three
" months that country will be a charge to you,
" and its fugitive riches will increaſe the trea-
" ſures of your enemies."

Such then are the bleſſed fruits of Democratick Emancipation, which France enjoys already, and which Holland has in proſpect, if France

perſeveres in holding it as a fraternized country. Pelet aſſerts that France has been in the ſituation which he deſcribes for *five years*, that is, ever ſince the commencement of the new ſyſtem. So then, during the preſent *free* Government, France has been *miſerable*; and during her old *ſlaviſh* Government ſhe was comparatively *happy!* This is plain; becauſe if ſhe had been miſerable under the old Government, *Pelet* could not have limited the turn of national miſery to *five* years.

What then follows? Clearly, that *French Liberty* has been productive of ſo much miſery, that they now look back to the very times of that old Government, which they ſo much reprobated, as times of happineſs compared with the preſent.

And what do the expreſſions of this ſame *Pelet* imply relative to Holland? Obviouſly, that Holland too was comparatively *happy* before the French entered it. "You," ſays he, "will *annihilate* that *beautiful creation* of human "induſtry; in three months time that country "will be a *charge* to you, and its fugitive riches "will encreaſe the treaſures of your enemies." So then before the French entered, Holland was *beautiful*, it was *rich*; but what will it be, if they continue in it? Its beauty (according to *Pelet*)

Pelet) will be annihilated, and its "riches will "make unto themſelves wings and fly away."

Governments, like all other human inſtitutions, muſt have their weakneſſes; nor can it be hoped that a community conſiſting of frail mortals ſhould be perfectly happy. But we can have few better proofs that the Government of a country is a good one, than that the country itſelf is *rich* and *beautiful*. This ſhews that induſtry is vigorous, and that men are encouraged to the honeſt acquiſition of wealth, by the proſpect of enjoying it without diſturbance. Thus, general employment is excited; and general employment infallibly conduces to general happineſs. I ſhall not diſpute with thoſe who view matters in a different light, and who think deſolation and deformity and want and deſpair to be the marks of a good Government; but I ſhall ſay, on the authority of *Pelet*, that if they are, the French, whether we conſider them at home or abroad, in their own country or in Holland, have unqueſtionably the beſt Government in the world: For (to uſe the words of the Prophet,) "The land is as the Garden of Eden before "them, but behind them a deſolate wilderneſs."

But after all it muſt be acknowledged that the Tree of French Liberty has by no means thriven ſo well in Holland as it has done elſewhere: If

we wiſh to ſee it, as Wolſey ſays, in Shakeſpeare, " bearing its bluſhing honours thick upon it," we muſt take a view of it in Spain: and here again we will admit no partial, prejudiced reporters: we will conſult the ſame honeſt Oppoſition paper (ſince it is ſo uſual to believe, that whatever oppoſes the Britiſh Government muſt be honeſt) that we did before.

In the *Courier* of April 27th, we are told, that on the 15th of the ſame month, Tallien made the lowing ſtatement in the Convention: " In the " Provinces of *Guipuſcoa* and *Biſcay*," ſaid he, " the inhabitants, friends to liberty, were ready " to receive the French as brethren; *St. Se-* " *baſtian* opened its gates with acclamations of " joy; but the entrance of the French troops " was diſtinguiſhed by pillage, and the moſt " unheard of cruelties. The Prieſts have been " arreſted, the Monks and Nuns have been " torn from their cloiſters, have been heaped " in carts and dragged to *Bayonne*, where they " were made to ſuffer the moſt unheard of treat- " ment. In Biſcay, columns of troops had ad- " vanced, carrying devaſtation and death with " them; towns and villages have been laid in " aſhes; thoſe vales where *peace* and *ſecurity* had, " TILL THEN *inhabited*, are become ſcenes of the " moſt atrocious barbarity. *The women are ra-* " *viſhed*;

" *viſhed*; and thoſe *who on their knees aſked for*
" *their lives, were barbarouſly maſſacred.*"

And now, whether we contemplate Democratick liberty in France, in Holland, or in Spain, is it not a moſt delightful and moſt alluring thing? In France, it *dupes with words*, and its fruits are *oppreſſion, ſcarcity of proviſions, languiſhment of manufacture, deſtruction of trade.* In Holland, it ſtrips the people of their gold and ſilver; and if it continues, will ſtrip the country of its *commerce*, its *riches*, and its *beauty*. And in Spain, amid thoſe vales in which TILL THEN (mark *till then, i. e.* till *French generoſity* came to free them from *Spaniſh deſpotiſm*) PEACE AND SECURITY *had dwelt*; it triumphs over all juſtice, decency and humanity, out-doing *Tiberius* in luſt, and *Nero* in cruelty.

" Mr. Pitt," ſays a Francis-ſtreet Declaimer, " commenced the war to curtail and weaken the " principles of liberty, and the *principles of li-* " *berty have been extended and fortified.*" What this Gentleman means by *the principles of liberty*, we can be at no loſs to determine How much reaſon he has to glory in their being *extended, and fortified*, let *duped* and beggared France, let Holland, once *rich* and *beautiful*, now *robbed* and *likely* to be ruined, let the lately *ſecure* and *peaceful*,

peaceful, but now bloody and depopulated plains of *Biſcay*, declare to an aſtoniſhed world.

People of Ireland! are you not very miſerable that you have not yet participated in theſe invaluable bleſſings? Have you not reaſon to lament that your friends in this city were not able to lay their ſchemes better, and that the Engliſh Fleet was not a little weaker, and the French Fleet ſomewhat ſtronger? Then you too might have been *enriched* like the *Dutch*, and made *happy* like the *Biſcayans*? Then in truth you would have been *greatly emancipated*; your country would have been emancipated from its wealth; your wives and daughters would have been emancipated from their chaſtity; and yourſelves, perhaps, as the laſt bleſſing of which you would have been capable, would have been emancipated from exiſtence.

ESSAY V.

DEMOCRATICK LIBERTY CONTINUED.

SEPT. 10, 1795.

MONTESQUIEU has obſerved, that the political liberty of the Subject, conſiſts "in a tranquillity of mind ariſing from the opinion each perſon has of his own ſafety," and, he adds, that "in order to have this liberty, it is requiſite the Government be ſo conſtituted as that one perſon need not be afraid of another."

This is plain common ſenſe, obvious to every man's reaſon, and correſponding with every man's feelings; but if ſo, what eſtimate are we to form of the effects of French Democracy?

The ſtatements made daily in the Convention are indiſputable, becauſe the Convention itſelf authenticates them, by making them the ground of its decrees. But if theſe accounts are authentick, may it not fairly be aſked, in what country, or at what period, has the very reverſe of political liberty been ſo completely exemplified as in France,

France, ſince its adoption of the Democratick ſyſtem?

Where or when had individuals ſo little ground to reckon upon their own perſonal ſafety? Where or when had every one man ſo much reaſon to be afraid of every other man?

What, by its own confeſſion, has been the Convention? Has it been the temple of rational liberty, the bright focus of national light, the terror of the oppreſſor, the aſylum of the wretched? Has it not, on the contrary, been at one period the mean unreſiſting inſtrument of a Robeſpierre; at another the weak, hood-winked dupe of its own villainous Commiſſioners; blind as a mole to the miſchiefs of the hour, and ſharp-ſighted as the eagle to thoſe that had gone by; a giant in theory and a pigmy in practice? "We "were forced," ſays Pouzalles, "to ſubmit to "the empire of an execrable faction, which ſhed "our blood, and afterwards extended its ravages "to every part of the Republick; the ſignal of "diſtreſs was given, but we had no ſuccour." An honourable acknowledgment from a body calling itſelf a Legiſlature! Is it not ſtrange that though none could diſprove this miſerable confeſſion, ſome ſhould not have objected to its being handed down as an hiſtorical document to poſterity?

But

But now that they dare to ſpeak out; now that they are in retroſpect ſo purely *virtuous* and ſo profoundly *wiſe*, what in fact do their inquiries amount to? The blackeſt ſcenes are developed daily; each freſh diſcuſſion brings forth ſome greater abominations; and the human fancy is puzzled to conjecture where the monſtrous volume is to end. But are not their accuſations of their colleagues, direct criminations of themſelves? For who, or what were thoſe blood-hounds who are now acknowledged to have confounded perſons and properties in one common wreck, and to have blended in promiſcuous ſlaughter all ages, ſexes, ranks and characters? Were they not the confidential members, the ſelected Commiſſioners of the Convention? Were they not thoſe too, who once uſed as plauſible language, and laid claim to as pure a patriotiſm as any of their accuſers? and is not candour itſelf obliged to ſuſpect that the chief difference between the one and the other lay rather in their ſituations than in their principles and tempers? All of them could not have authoritative truſts in the Departments; but it appears, that few who had the opportunity to be villains, ſuffered it to eſcape unimproved; and thoſe who had not the opportunity, have in ſeveral inſtances ſhewn what they would have done, had it been in their power. Every one recollects *Jean de Brie's* famous motion for a band of aſſaſſinating Miſſio-

naries; and *Tallien's* propoſal for executing thoſe who were accuſed, without the *unneceſſary* forms of a trial, can ſcarcely be forgotten. And yet *Jean de Brie* ſits quietly to this hour in the Convention, and *Tallien* is little leſs than a leader of the preſent prevailing party. But even the few proceſſes which have commenced, ſeem ſcarcely to have been inſtituted in earneſt: we hear of numerous accuſations, but of few or no puniſhments; and *Barrere*, though accuſed of the groſſeſt crimes, does not appear to be as yet even brought to trial.

But be the proceedings againſt the culprits ſincere or hypocritical, the crimes are ſuch as the world has ſcarcely before witneſſed. Cruel as the Spaniards may have been in South America, the circumſtances of the Natives did not admit of a ſimilar pillage; and the ſhorter duration of the former maſſacre of Paris could not have left room for ſuch diverſified barbarity. It is in *free Revolutionary France only*, that at one moment, and in the ſame perſons, *Nero* would have ſeen himſelf rivalled in malignity, and *Heliogabalus* in buffoonery; it is in free revolutionary France only, that *Voltaire's* ideal Monſter, the blended Monkey and Tyger, is realized to a nicety; it is on that high-raiſed theatre, and in the view of an aſtoniſhed world, that men acting as Magiſtrates, and calling themſelves

ſelves Philoſophers, have "played ſuch fantaſ-
"tic tricks before high Heaven," not barely as would make "Angels weep," but as Ideots would deſpiſe, and Savages abhor.

Is this declamation? Let the man that thinks ſo, if ſuch can be, advert to the reports of the Convention, as given in an Iriſh Oppoſition Paper, the *Hibernian Journal*, of Wedneſday Auguſt the 19th. Let him read the account of *Lequinio*, a Commiſſioner from the Convention; one moment embracing, in the view of the multitude, a ruffian who had offered voluntarily to be the miniſter of his malice, another moment acting the part of an aſſaſſin himſelf; now haranguing the people from the blood-ſtained Guillotine, and then forcing the defenceleſs victims of his tyranny to aſcend it, merely that he might make them trample on the remains of their ſlaughtered relatives! Let him read the laconic epiſtle of *Piorry*, another Deputy and Commiſſioner to the People of Poitiers: "Loſe "not a moment, every thing muſt be deſtroyed, "burnt, guillotined, carried off, regenerated!" And, laſtly, let him attend to the merciful project of Bo, for giving plenty to France, by cutting off one half of its inhabitants. "Be of "good cheer, France has enough for twelve "millions of people; the reſt of its inhabitants

" will be put to death, and then proviſions will " be abundant!"

Surely ſince men began to multiply on the face of the earth, ſuch ſcenes never were exhibited in it before. I will not inſult the underſtanding and the feelings of my reader, by aſking what connexion all this has with *Liberty?* But I call upon the man of candour and reflection, to ſay, whether it is not amazingly like the retributive juſtice of God? France would not even allow *exiſtence* to the humane, tender hearted, too gentle Louis; it ſaw him, approvingly ſaw him, hunted down and worried to death by an infernal pack of Jackals and Hyænas. What then could be more equitable, than that the monſters ſhould turn upon thoſe who had encouraged them, and glut their whetted appetite with the blood, the treaſures, and the happineſs of France itſelf?

ESSAY VI.

DEMOCRATICK CONSISTENCY.

SEPT. 19, 1795.

THIS, doubtleſs, is the age of Political Prodigies. The well-known Metamorphoſes of the Roman Poet, ſeem almoſt to ſhrink within the limits of nature and probability, when compared with the tranſmutations juſt now exhibited in the French Convention.

Legendre, the Butcher, the Leader and the Mouth-piece of that Rabble of Savages, who, with a pair of old black Breeches on a pole, and the heart of a Calf on the point of a pike, for their ſtandards, burſt into the Caſtle of the Thuilleries on the memorable 20th of June—*Legendre*, who propoſed that *Manuel* (who, though a Democrat, had a conſcience and a heart) ſhould be voted *mad*, merely becauſe, while the trial of the King was pending, he ſuggeſted

geſted that tickets of admiſſion ſhould be diſtributed among the real Citizens, in order to prevent the galleries from being filled by a domineering mob—This ſame *Legendre*, now pathetically laments—what? That the Convention are trenching on the ſovereignty of his old aſſociates; that the Ariſtocratized Legiſlators wiſh to depreſs and trample on the true *Sans Culottes*, and to ſubſtitute their own Majeſty in the room of the Majeſty of the People? No ſuch thing; but on the contrary, that "the Primary "Aſſemblies of Paris, though generally com-"poſed of honeſt Citizens, are *governed* by a *horde* of BEGGARLY RASCALS!"

Is it poſſible that this ruffian forgets, or can he perſuade himſelf that the world forgets, that ſhortly elapſed period, when, at the head, and in the name of juſt *ſuch* a *horde* of BEGGARLY RASCALS, he told the gentle, ſubmiſſive Louis, "Monſieur, liſten to us; yes, Monſieur, you "are made to liſten to us; you are a perfidious "fellow; you have always deceived us, and "you are deceiving us ſtill!" And, yet this is the man who, on the 8th of this preſent month, declared in the Convention, that they (the Convention) having in vain tried the effects of Reaſon, (i. e. having in vain tried to prevail with the *Sovereign People*, to bow before the ſelf-created

created ſovereignty of himſelf and his colleagues) *muſt now have recourſe to Arms!*

But even the effrontery of this Hero of the Slaughter houſe, muſt yield to the happier impudence of *Tallien*, who, in his harangue to the Convention on the 5th inſtant, exhorts them to "make uſe of their *omnipotence*, and to march "under the Standards of the Armies, and of the "*Patriots* of 1789." But, who, or what is this *Tallien?* Why, at the period he mentions he was nobody, an obſcure Clerk in Paris. Then only, when the chaldron of Democracy began to boil high, and the vileſt dregs of the community aroſe from its bottom and formed a ſcum upon its ſurface, then, and not till then, *Tallien* roſe alſo. His primary function was that of Secretary to the ſanguinary ſelf-created Council of Commune, which commenced its fell career on the night of the 9th of Auguſt, and under whoſe ſuperintendence the maſſacres of the 2d of September were projected and achieved. His firſt public appearance was at the Bar of the Legiſlative Aſſembly, as a Commiſſary from that ſame Council; where during the very ſeaſon of perpetration, while every heart, that retained any thing human, was thrilling with horror, he coolly excuſed the helliſh buſineſs, by calling it "the, in ſome ſort, *juſt* "vengeance of the People!"

When

When for his merits, thus opening to view, he was elected to the Convention, he not only diſtinguiſhed himſelf by his petulance and ſelf-ſufficiency, but ſtill more by his determinate oppoſition to every motion for inveſtigating thoſe murderous tranſactions, which he, with his boſom friends *Robeſpierre* and *Chabot*, on all occaſions aſſerted to have been the act of the people themſelves. Of that execrable faction, ſo long as it appeared likely to retain its power, he was the decided partizan; and on ſome occaſions even called forth the cenſure of his co-partners by the rancour of his conduct and expreſſions. When, for inſtance, the queſtion of allowing Counſel to the impriſoned Monarch was debated in the Convention, a mercileſs wretch (*Oſſelin*) propoſed that they themſelves ſhould name Counſel for the King, whom he muſt either accept, or find others, within four and twenty hours. To this even the majority of the Convention objected, ſtruck with the unreaſonableneſs of obliging an accuſed man to take Counſel choſen by his accuſers, or an impriſoned man to fix ſo important a choice in ſo limited a ſpace of time. But what ſaid the *mild* and *moderate Tallien?* "Let him," ſaid he, "do the beſt he can; "let him find counſel who will act, that is his "affair; it is our concern to avenge the National "Majeſty." Again, while the King was preparing for his trial, it was propoſed that he ſhould

ſhould have a free intercourſe with his family; this was no ſooner mentioned than the great majority of the Convention agreed to it almoſt by acclamation. But even then the virulence of *Tallien* tranſported him ſo far as to tell the Convention, "You may decree this as you pleaſe, "but if the Municipality" (that bleſſed neſt of vipers, whoſe Secretary he had been) "do "not chuſe it, he will be allowed to ſee none of "them." The indignation of the Convention was excited, the wretch was cenſured, and the cenſure inſerted in the *Proces Verbal.* But the malignity of his heart could not be reſtrained; for even then, when the cauſe of inhumanity was compleatly gained, when the fulneſs of ſucceſs might have afforded a moment's relaxation to the malice of the devil himſelf, I mean when the King was pronounced guilty, even then *Tallien* was not to be ſatisfied; but, as if ever on the watch to graſp the utmoſt poſſibilities of cruelty, he urged immediate execution, on a pretence of mercy ſo infernally ironical, that even *Danton* himſelf was ſhocked, and remonſtrated againſt his barbarity.

And this man now talks about juſtice and moderation; condemns loudly the meaſures of that party whom he once ſpurred on to enormity; and ſpeaks with rapture of the *Patriots* of 1789, whom he and his coadjutors devoted to death or

drove into exile. This man, the *creature*, the *inſtrument*, the *juſtifier*, the *exciter* of dark conſpiracy and bloody inſurrection, now dares to ſay that "a new *Royal* conſpiracy like that of the "31ſt May," (that is, the conſpiracy of himſelf and his friends, which raiſed *Robeſpierre* to the Dictator's chair, and more than twenty of his opponents in one day to the ſcaffold) "is pre-"paring, and that they are endeavouring *once* "*more* to miſlead the Commune, by perſuading "the inhabitants that they are *Sovereigns*." And if they are, whoſe example are they following? Whoſe leſſons are they inculcating? Thoſe ſurely of *Tallien* himſelf and his execrable auxiliaries! Miſerable, diſtracted France, what muſt be thy fate, when thus in abeyance between the miſrule of the disjointed, perplexed, infuriate multitude, on the one hand, and the military dominion of ſuch infernal vagabonds and hypocrites on the other!

Iriſh and Britiſh Democrats, (thoſe of you I mean who are not in the ſecret; who, miſled by artful demagogues, are yourſelves more ſinned againſt than ſinning) for your Country's ſake, open your eyes, and ſee in *Legendre* and *Tallien* what muſt ever be the character of Revolutionary Leaders when once raiſed to power. Aſk your own reaſon, whether the dominion of ſuch men would be a bleſſing to this country; and

reſt

reſt aſſured, that if a Revolution would not *find* ſuch characters, it would *make* them; it would hatch them by its peſtiferous heat in the carcaſe of mangled ſociety. And think, oh think, whether the preſent regular adminiſtration of laws and protection of property, (regular I ſay, unleſs ſo far as it has been made otherwiſe by the inſidious artifices of your own Chieftains,) would be well exchanged for the baſe ſtratagems, the inſulting haughtineſs, the fawning adulation, and the brow-beating deſpotiſm of ſuch Muſhroom Miſcreants!

ESSAY VII.

JUNE 16, 1796.

IN my walks through this city, I ſometimes fall in with a claſs of men ſo peculiarly diſtinguiſhed from all other perſons, that I dare ſay, many beſides myſelf are in the habit of obſerving them. They appear occaſionally in private companies, but they make a far more conſpicuous figure at Clubs and publick Societies. The traits by which they are known, appear with equal prominence in their converſation and coun-

tenance. In their converſation they harp eternally on the ſame ſtring, the wickedneſs of Government and the wrongs done to the people. In their countenances they exhibit the moſt ſtriking marks of diſcontent, irritability and arrogance. If the gloom brightens at any time into a doubtful ſunſhine, it is when the French have gained a victory, when the Engliſh Fleet has been driven back by contrary winds, or when *Horne Tooke* has entertained the mob at Weſtminſter with a philippick on the Miniſter.

It cannot be doubted, but that theſe men are ſingularly unhappy, and on this account they might at firſt view ſeem objects of commiſeration; but the indefatigable eagerneſs with which they labour to make others as wretched as themſelves, and to transfuſe into the minds of all with whom they converſe, that corroding venom which rankles in their own breaſts, has in it ſomething ſo exquiſitely infernal, ſo like what we have been uſed to attribute to the arch-enemy of God and man, that the tendencies to pity muſt in all well-diſpoſed minds ſpeedily give way to diſguſt and indignation.

In what degree the perſons to whom I allude ſtand related to the diſſembodied National Guards, or the diſperſed Society of United Iriſhmen, I ſhall not pretend to determine. One thing

thing is plain, that they are actuated by the ſame ſpirit, and are in purſuit of the ſame ends: they only differ in adopting, perhaps through neceſſity, more indirect and leſs alarming means. The war exiſts; the object is unchanged; but the champions of this day hope to effect to *ſap* what their predeceſſors failed in accompliſhing by *ſtorm*.

Their immediate purpoſe is too plain to be miſtaken: they evidently wiſh and hope to make the great body of the People ſo compleatly diſſatisfied with the preſent order of things, that they ſhall at laſt riſe in a maſs, overturn the Government, and thus leave an open field for the introduction of any theoretick plan which the enterprizing genius of thoſe who excite them *now*, and truſt to be their leaders *then*, may happen to ſuggeſt.

That the deſigns of theſe men have failed hitherto, or may fail finally as to their full accompliſhment, makes little difference in the amount of their merit or their guilt. If their purpoſe be virtuous, their intention ſhould not be defrauded of its due praiſe, becauſe from contingent circumſtances it has proved abortive: if it be criminal, they ſtand charged in the ſight of God and man with the enormities they would have committed, and the miſeries they would have occaſioned,

occaſioned, had Providence permitted their ſchemes to be ſucceſsful.

I aſk then, (and I conceive it is a queſtion which even the leſs guilty agitators of doubtful political points have not yet conſidered as they ought,) whether any crime can be equal to the wilful, wanton endeavour to diſſolve the regular order of a community? If murder, and pillage, and ruthleſs havoc, and headlong devaſtation entail guilt on the immediate actors, they who cauſe theſe enormities, who determinately pull down the only barriers which reſtrain them, who excite the paſſions which muſt produce them, and create the circumſtances which leave ſcope for them, they, I ſay, are much more than accomplices; they muſt paſs for principals in every crime that is committed, in every barbarity that is perpetrated.

That Law and Government of ſome kind are neceſſary to the ſafety of ſociety, might be proved, if any one was mad enough to deny it, by lamentable demonſtration. For when at any time theſe reſtraints have been ſuſpended, even by events which muſt have called forth pity where it was, and might almoſt have created it, where it was not, by earthquakes for inſtance, or by conflagrations, the ſpirit of violence and rapine has diſcovered itſelf immediately.

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The ſenſe of this neceſſity firſt ſuggeſted the only poſſible remedy; and the eſtabliſhment of Law and Government marked the epocha of man's riſe from ſavageneſs to civilization, from brutal fierceneſs to the endearments of humanity. Then, and not till then, came the idea of ſafety, and with the idea of ſafety, the attempt to be comfortable; then, and not before, the ſanguinary howl ſoftened into the ſong of peace; then ſprung up the charities which bind man to man, the virtues which enrich our nature, the acquirements which adorn it, the domeſtic and ſocial enjoyments which make life worth preſerving.

But would theſe indiſpenſable requiſites to human happineſs ſurvive the burſt of anarchy? Would not the overbearing flood of uncurbed paſſion, of unreſtrained depravity, ſweep them all away? And would not the poor diſconſolate lover of order ſee all that he held dear, the fruit of his induſtry, the reward of his ingenuity, his domeſtic comforts, his fireſide delights, all carried off, hopeleſsly and remedileſsly carried off by that reſiſtleſs torrent, which while riſing above every mound of right, would be to all the purpoſes of vice as ductile as a rivulet?

Gracious Heaven! And are there indeed men in the community, who, loſt to all the tender feelings of nature, would put theſe eſſentials of human

human comfort to hazard; nay, to infinitely worſe than hazard, to certain ruin, and for no one rational object? We ſhudder at the tale of midnight murder, or the narrative of cold cruelty; but what midnight murder, real or fabled, what cold cruelty, in ancient or modern ſtory, is equal to this—that men not driven mad by oppreſſion, not rouſed to enthuſiaſm by any ſpecies of perſecution, ſhould thus make open war on ſocial happineſs, on every thing that is mild or gentle, or eſtimable in human nature?

And are there ſuch perſons? Alas, are there not? Would there be inflammatory Newſpapers if there were not ſuch to cheriſh and to feed them? Would there have been *Defenders*, if there had not been ſuch perſons to encourage them? Or would there be juſt now a band of plotters, of deeply ſyſtematized plotters againſt the Government and peace of the Country, in the proſperous and plenteous *North*, if the tones of ſedition had not been ſounded from the metropolis, and echoed and re-echoed by that buſy inſtrument of miſchief, "The Northern Star. ?" Yes, I write from honeſt indignation, becauſe I know that in one of the moſt thriving diſtricts in the kingdom, where oppreſſion is not felt, where diſtreſs does not occur except from mere misfortune or abſolute vice, the ſpirit of ſedition, unexcited by the ſhadow of provocation, and wrought

wrought up to phrenzy ſolely by the mental poiſons of thoſe murderous Mountebanks, has, within theſe few weeks, precipitated a number of wretched perſons, (who in order to be compleatly happy, wanted nothing but contented minds) into the gloom of a jail, preparatory, perhaps, to the horrors of a gibbet.

ESSAY VIII.

JUNE 18, 1796.

IT is by no means my wiſh to indulge in unqualified cenſure or acrimonious ſeverity towards thoſe political agitators to whom I alluded in my former paper: I think in my conſcience, that they are guilty beyond what words can expreſs; but ſtill I would much rather convince than exaſperate them; and I ſhould be ſorry to excite the deteſtation of others againſt them, if I could only hope that they themſelves would be led to regret their miſconduct, and to open their boſoms to "the compunctious viſitings of nature."

To themſelves then, rather than to the Public at large do I make my appeal. I call upon every man who has the underſtanding and the feelings of a human being, and who is conſcious of having ſo written or ſpoken, as to encourage that ſpirit of reſtleſs diſaffection which in ſo many parts of this kingdom has already produced, and is at this moment producing ſuch deplorable effects, to enter at length into a review of his own conduct, to call himſelf before the tribunal of his own conſcience, and to enquire impartially and ſolemnly, whether he has acted wiſely and well, as a Patriot and as a Man, and conſiſtently with his duty to his Fellow-creatures and his God.

That the agitations to which I refer (agitations ſo unlike any thing that ever before occurred in our memory, ſo determinately *political*, and ſo ſingularly *ſyſtematic*) are and muſt be chargeable on the perſons to whom I am addreſſing myſelf, they themſelves will not venture to diſpute. It is notorious that for years, they have been labouring in every poſſible way to detach and alienate the lower ranks from the higher ranks, the People from the Government. In hand-bills of various name and title, ſtudiouſly framed, ſo as to operate on vulgar minds through the medium of their ruling paſſions, and diſſeminated ſo induſtriouſly as to find their way to every village, fair,

fair, and market, they have been inceſſantly inculcating on the multitude that they were the moſt wretched, abuſed, oppreſſed people under the canopy of Heaven, that their miſery aroſe ſolely from a political cauſe, viz. the radically bad Government under which they lived, that their happineſs muſt depend on an alteration of that Government, and that ſince thoſe in power were not diſpoſed to comply with the popular wiſh, the people ought to do juſtice to themſelves by having recourſe to ſuch movements as could not be reſiſted.

Let any perſon acquainted with what has been paſſing in this country for the laſt four years, ſay, whether this has not been the uniform purport of all the publications of the well-known Society of United Iriſhmen; and I would further aſk, whether the ſame deſign has not been too ſucceſsfully purſued, (even ſince their firſt mode of diſſemination has been deemed inexpedient) through the medium of ſuch news-papers as were willing to encreaſe their circulation, by courting depravity and ſacrificing truth?

But was it poſſible in the nature of things that ſuch ſtatements could be urged with earneſtneſs, and inculcated with unwearied aſſiduity, and not make a powerful impreſſion on the minds of the populace? The perſon, be he who he may,

Mountebank or Politician, who deſcants on human miſery will be ſure of an audience, and if he flatters the paſſions while he pretends to furniſh remedies, his preſcriptions will be received as the dictates of an oracle. What then could be expected from the publications to which I allude, but the very conſequences which have followed? When the ignorant vulgar read them, or heard them read, (and care was taken that they ſhould not want the opportunity) and when they met with ſuch poſitiveneſs of allegation, ſuch apparent fervour of ſentiment, and warmth of expreſſion, how could they doubt but that every aſſertion was true? And what could be the effect of ſuch a perſuaſion, but deep hatred of Government, rankling jealouſy of their ſuperiors, and a fixed determination to force their way through every difficulty and danger, in order to come at that political paradiſe which was thus preſented to their view?

To imagine that the perſons in queſtion were not aware of the likelihood of theſe effects, would be to deny them the praiſe not only of ſuperior talents, but of common rationality. Suppoſing, then, that their exhortations had been attended with equal ſucceſs in all the different diſtricts of the kingdom, I could wiſh them to aſk themſelves, what would be the vaſt advantage?

tage? We have heard of the achievements of Defenderiſm where it was triumphant; would it be very much for the happineſs of the country if theſe outrages were to be univerſal, if they were to riſe above the check of magiſterial power, and if the exiſting Government, faulty as ſome men may eſteem it, were to be ſet aſide to make room for a proviſional Directory of Defenders?

When malice is indulged to its extent, every object is overlooked, except what tends to gratify the predominant paſſion. An ambition as frantick as it is profligate, has impelled a few incendiaries to aim at the deſtruction of the preſent ruling powers, and they account no expedient too deſperate, if it only tends to accompliſh their purpoſe. But, ſuppoſing them to have gained their point, are they ſure that even they themſelves would not ſoon have reaſon to repent of their raſhneſs? If general inſurrection were now the order of the day, would the reſtleſs multitude continue to bow before the ſpeculative geniuſes who had called them into action? Or can we imagine that a committee of *Switcher Donellies* * would long be ſwayed by the metaphorick

* The *Nom de Guerre* of a noted leader of Defenders and United Iriſhmen juſt then taken into cuſtody at *Magbera* in the county of Londonderry.

rick energy of an *Helot's* † eloquence? It had been all-powerful to excite, but would it be equally effectual to reſtrain? It was well fitted to draw the peaſant from his induſtry, and to engage him in mid-night murder, and noon day depredation. But when the multitude had once tried the ſtrength of their own brawny arms, can we think that tropes and figures of ſpeech would ſtill keep them in ſubjection to a few phyſicians, lawyers, and haberdaſhers, whoſe "profeſſional prudence" had induced them to conceal themſelves until they hoped there was no hazard in the expoſure of their perſons?

But in putting theſe queſtions I feel diſcouraged. They to whom they apply, are as "the "deaf adder which ſtoppeth her ears." Once more then I turn to the friends of order and human happineſs. I call upon them to weigh what I have ſaid, and to judge whether any madneſs is to be compared with the attempts which we have ſeen, and ſtill ſee, to excite the ignorant impaſſioned populace to diſcontent, to violence, to rebellion? and whether they who perſevere in this diabolical purſuit, after the deplorable reſults which have already ariſen from it, and in the view

† Alluding to a well known publication, called the *Helot's Letters*, which appeared about the year 1784, and was the firſt effuſion of that inflammatory rhetorick which has ſince been uſed by the United Iriſhmen with a ſucceſs ſo fatal to the quiet and ſafety of the country.

view of thoſe infinitely greater miſchiefs which would neceſſarily accrue from the completion of their ſchemes, do not deſerve to be hurled from ſociety as the enemies of God and Man?

ESSAY IX.

JUNE 23, 1796.

THE exertions of Government to ſuppreſs that ſpirit of combination and inſurgency by which this country has been harraſſed, are deſerving of the higheſt praiſe. They have been as judicious as they were vigorous, and the benefit ariſing from them has, perhaps, been as great as on any fair grounds could have been expected. But I heſitate not to ſay that, in order to a radical cure, there is a neceſſity for remedies which no government of any extenſive country can of itſelf apply. Government may repel actual inſurrection by oppoſing to it a ſuperior force: it may give energy to the endeavours of active Magiſtrates by a prompt attention to their applications: it may keep good order in the metropolis and its immediate environs;

rons, but it cannot detect the embryo plots that are hatching from time to time in remote provinces. It cannot follow the midnight steps of the foul fiend while he sows the tares of sedition in the soil of village simplicity. It may lop off the stem, what appears above ground and strikes the eye at a distance, but it is impossible it should be able to pursue and trace out the entangled roots of the mischief which extend themselves beneath the surface.

These are duties which they, whose interest is at stake must perform for themselves. The men of understanding, of property, of principle, in the different parts of the country, must exert themselves to preserve the country, with an assiduity proportionate to that which other men have used, and are still using to destroy it, or a thorough extirpation of the evil cannot possibly be expected.

That the actual agitators are few in number, and that amongst those who have any pretensions to respectability, the well-disposed would outreckon the malcontents by hundreds to one, I cannot entertain a doubt. But the mischief is, that the many are indolent, while the few are indefatigable. Good, easy, undesigning men, sit quietly at their fire-sides, while the guileful anarchists

anarchiſts are diffuſing the principles and maturing the ſchemes of inſurrection and revolution.

To an indolence of preciſely a ſimilar nature, much more than to the number or the ſtrength of their adverſaries, the gentry of France have owed their ruin. Had they, at the beginning, exerted themſelves in their reſpective provinces to prevent combinations, to detect miſrepreſentations, and to prevent their adherents and their neighbours from being debauched by the maddening principles of the Jacobins, they would, in all probability, never have been driven from that country, of which, in ſpite of all that can be advanced by prejudice or by petulance, they were the grace and the ornament.

But if ever it ſhould happen that the Gentlemen of this country ſhould, in conſequence of a ſimilar negligence, experience a ſimilar ruin, their blame would be aggravated beyond all compariſon; becauſe they have advantages, as well as motives, which French Gentlemen were not bleſſed with. Here we know what we have to ſupport, a Conſtitution under which we and our fathers have enjoyed the moſt ſuſtantial bleſſings; and the permanence of which is our only tenure for public and private ſafety, for property, liberty, and life. A French Gentleman could not feel this; ſtill leſs could he enforce it

upon the ranks beneath him. He could not appeal to the experience of the manufacturer or the husbandman for their exemption from oppression, for their uniform enjoyment of the most rational liberty; he could not urge them not to hazard blessings which they had not yet enjoyed. An Irish Gentleman, on the contrary, has the *reason* and the *conscience* of the farmer and the tradesman ready retained to support him; he has every thing on his side but *ignorance*, which he may do much to enlighten, and *profligacy*, which he has still sufficient power to repress.

It is the glory of the British Empire, that the goverments of which it is composed neither *do* nor *can* rest on the basis of mere executive power; and that in order to their stability, they require the constant and concurrent support of men of property and independence. The Government is in fact little more than the concentration of *their* strength, and they again are the natural conduits, the nerves and arteries of the Body Politic, through which alone Government can extend its energy through the system. If therefore men of property fail in this their legitimate function, the body must become paralytic; unable to repel attacks from without, or to throw off maladies from within; and the head and the members,

members, the Government and the property muſt be in danger of periſhing together.

I aſk then, have the men of property and independence done in general, what they owe at once to the Government and to themſelves? On the contrary, have they not in too many inſtances looked up to Government as the waggoner in the fable looked up to *Jupiter*, when he expected the aid of heaven without once putting his own ſhoulder to the wheel? When the votaries of ſedition formed their well-known ſociety in this metropolis, for the avowed purpoſe of annihilating the Conſtitution, (a ſociety which was in its form an embryo *Convention*, and in its action the very ape of the Jacobin Club of Paris,) and when its myrmidons had already muſtered, and paraded openly, carrying the menace of treaſon in their very name, exhibiting on their buttons the Iriſh harp *un-crowned*, and wearing *trowſers* that they might affect *Sans-Culotterie* even to the letter, the Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council cruſhed this rank rebellion by a timely and temperate exerciſe of their conſtitutional power. When the ſame ſociety had the audacity to call for "a national convention, to declare" (as in the delirious rant of France they termed it) "the national will," the legiſlature, by an act of parliament, which was only declaratory of the common law, and of the *common ſenſe*

of the country, at once extinguiſhed their ardour and their hope. But I again aſk, what did the men of property throughout the kingdom do? Did they, as was done in England (where the neceſſity was much leſs,) and as the very practice of their adverſaries might have ſuggeſted to them, form a conſtitutional league to counteract the anti-conſtitutional efforts of the lurking traitors, to adminiſter antidotes as faſt as *they* uttered poiſons, and to meet each ſtimulus to *popular phrenzy* with an equally ardent appeal to *reaſon* and to *conſcience?*—On the contrary, were not the flying ſheets of the enemy (thoſe miaſms of mental peſtilence) indolently permitted to make their way to every farm-houſe, and to every cottage; and to appear, in the view of the multitude, who judge only from appearance, *unanſwerable*, becauſe no anſwer was given to them?

It was from theſe ſeeds, I ſcruple not to repeat, more than from any other cauſe (only aided by the indefatigable after-culture of malignant news writers) that the various enormities of Defenderiſm have ariſen, to disfigure and diſgrace our country; and that now, after having been mowed down by the ſithe of juſtice in ſo many different parts of the kingdom, they burſt forth again in the extremity of the North. And why do they thus appear? becauſe the roots

are

are in the ſoil, and can only be extirpated by local exertion, by the vigilance and aſſiduity of thoſe who are on the ſpot, of thoſe who know the men and the circumſtances of that part of the country.

To the men of property and independence then, in thoſe Northern Counties, (but not to them excluſively, ſince what is their duty is more or leſs the duty of all) would I now take the liberty of addreſſing myſelf: "For your own "ſakes, and for the ſake of your country, do "not feed by your inertneſs that miſchief which "your vigorous exertions would very ſoon and "very eaſily ſuppreſs. Let not the leaders of ſe-"dition ſuppoſe you are afraid of them, nor "leave them any room to perſuade thoſe whom "they are labouring to ſeduce, that you are "diſpoſed to yield to efforts which you find "it impoſſible to repel. Take inſtruction from "your adverſaries, and learn from their exam-"ple the beſt methods of counteracting them. "They unite together to aid each other by mu-"tual counſels, and to act more effectually, by "acting in concert. Co-operate, you, to pre-"vent miſchief as cloſely and as ſteadily as they "do to perpetrate it. They take care to know "what *you* are doing, that they may guard "againſt you; be you equally vigilant in ob-"ſerving *them*, and make them know and feel "that

" that you do ſo. They build upon your inac-
" tion; the appearance of your activity will diſ-
" courage and intimidate them.

" They labour to make proſelytes, and to
" inſtil their pernicious opinions into all they
" converſe with. Meet them on this very
" ground; loſe no opportunity of converſing
" calmly, but earneſtly, with your neighbours,
" your tenants, and even your day-labourers,
" and of preſſing upon them the wickedneſs and
" the madneſs of deſtroying trade, ſtopping the
" courſe of induſtry, and letting looſe violence
" and rapine and murder to lay waſte the coun-
" try if they ſhould be ſucceſsful, and of bring-
" ing themſelves to the gallows if they ſhould
" not.

" Farther, the perſons whom you have to op-
" poſe, read and ſtudy that they may be able to
" preach ſedition. They furniſh themſelves with
" the arguments of democratick writers, and
" what they want in reaſon they make up by the
" impoſing ſhew of ſuperior knowledge. Do
" you alſo, take pains, if you are not already in-
" formed ſufficiently, to acquaint yourſelves with
" their uſual artifices, and with the moſt conclu-
" ſive replies to them; and when you meet any
" tract which you think calculated to undeceive
" and tranquillize the popular mind, be you as

" aſſiduous

" affiduous in diffeminating it, as the United
" Iriſhmen have been in ſending abroad thoſe
" of a contrary tendency. If even your ſucceſs
" ſhould not always be ſtriking, do not relin-
" quiſh your endeavours. You will ſtagger even
" where you do not convince; though you may
" not overcome prejudice, you will inſpire doubt,
" and awaken conſcience. And even that deep-
" rooted malignity on which reaſon cannot ope-
" rate, will be awed and made deſpondent by
" your ſpirit and perſeverance."

ESSAY X.

JULY 7, 1796.

PERHAPS ſome of your readers will ſuppoſe that in the hints to country gentlemen in my laſt paper, I ought to have introduced the diſtreſſes of the poor, and urged their relief as one means of reſtoring tranquillity. My omiſſion in this reſpect did not ariſe from inſenſibility to diſtreſs, let it exiſt where it may; but it proceeded from the deepeſt conviction that the preſent diſturbances amongſt the lower claſſes

have not ariſen from their diſtreſſes, and that to repreſent them as having done ſo is a groſs and miſchievous impoſition.

If thoſe diſturbances proceeded from diſtreſs, it would be natural to infer that the reſentment of the ſuppoſed wrongs would be ſtrongeſt where the wrongs themſelves were moſt ſenſibly experienced, and that, of courſe, the moſt diſtreſſed diſtricts of the kingdom would, in general, be the moſt turbulent. But has this been the caſe?—Does it appear that they who have been loudeſt in their complaints, have had the moſt plauſible pretences to remonſtrate againſt injuries; or that ſcenes of greateſt agitation have been generally thoſe of leaſt happineſs?

Let it be obſerved that I do not now ſpeak of thoſe local and petty inſurrections with which this country has, at all times, been harraſſed. I do not advert to ſudden riſings of mobs, to quarrels with exciſe-men or tythe-proctors, nor to aſſociations of banditti for the mere purpoſe of nightly depredations. But I confine myſelf to Defenderiſm,* in its new and ſyſtematical form;

* The diſturbances in the North which are here termed *Defenderiſm*, were in fact the re-invigorated movements of the Society of UNITED IRISHMEN, who after a temporary depreſſion, about this time reſumed their activity, and ſpread themſelves through the province of Ulſter, with greater ſpirit and more conſiſtency of plan, than ever

form; to the methodized operations which have of late ſhewn themſelves in different parts of the kingdom; which appear bound together by a ſecret and myſterious chain, and which, ſcorning all reference to ſpecific grievances, regard Government as the one great grievance, and a democratick revolution as the only remedy.

I aſk, then, did this miſchievous combination originate in diſtreſs? Its firſt movements were in a region where diſtreſs is as little known as in any in Europe, in the town and neighbourhood of Belfaſt. Here, it is notorious, the ſpirit of fraternization firſt embodied itſelf in a ſociety, on the very face of which, even in its infancy, every revolutionary feature was boldly prominent. It firſt voice was an outcry, not againſt perſonal or civil wrongs, for it felt none; not againſt ſuppoſed political faults or deficiencies, for of theſe it diſdained to take cognizance, but againſt the exiſting conſtitution of the kingdom. "We have," ſaid they who ſpoke for it, "no National Government." And the object it aimed at was correſpondent to its complaint, an abolition of the Commons' Houſe of Parliament, and the ſubſtitution of a mob-elected and mob-dependent

 aſſembly

ever before. This has appeared ſince, from the evidence laid before the Committees of both Houſes of Parliament. But as there was no means of proving the fact at the time of writing the above, it was thought beſt to deſignate thoſe commotions by the term which was then generally deſcriptive of plans of combination and inſurrection.

aſſembly in its room. " We have gone," ſays they " to what we conceive to be the root of " the evil; we have ſtated what we conceive to " be the remedy. With a parliament *thus re-* " *formed*, EVERY THING *is eaſy*; *without it* NO- " THING *can be done*. And we do call upon and " moſt earneſtly exhort our countrymen to fol- " low our example, and form ſimilar ſocieties in " every quarter of the kingdom."

What miſery, can we conceive, did theſe firſt votaries of anarchy experience, when they rung this early alarum-bell to the yet ſlumbering turbulence of the multitude? Where they pining in want? Did they feel oppreſſion? Did they lack one requiſite of earthly comfort? Were they not in general, in proſperous trade, in increaſing wealth, in circumſtances, of which, in moſt inſtances, their births had given no promiſe?— What then excited this deſperate appeal? Their own expreſſions abundantly inform us:—" With " a Parliament thus reformed," (that is, made menially ſubſervient to the will of the populace) " *every thing is eaſy*, without it NOTHING CAN " BE DONE." In other words, " wealthy and " comfortable as our external circumſtances may " be, we are, and will be unhappy, and will do " our utmoſt to make all others unhappy, until " we, the wiſe, eloquent, able politicians of " Belfaſt, ſhall have the Legiſlature under our " controul,

" controul, and ſhall, of courſe, be able to do " with it and with the country, whatever we " think proper."

If we could for a moment overlook the wickedneſs of ſuch a project, we might amuſe ourſelves with the exquiſite abſurdity of thoſe who conceived it. We have heard of perſons who imagined they were turned into glaſs, or who thought their heads ſo enormous that they could not paſs through ordinary doors. But theſe and all other inſtances of hypocondriacal inſanity are but mere types and ſhadows of the far more prepoſterous caſe of warm yeomen and thriving traders, thus wretched in the midſt of abundance, one moment calling themſelves ſlaves, the next raging and foaming, and invoking the nation to riſe and aſſiſt them, merely becauſe they think they are born to rule the State, and are not permitted to carry their ſublime purpoſes into execution.

And yet frantick as the call was, it thrilled upon the ready tuned heart-ſtrings of the congenial ſpirits in this metropolis? A ſociety was forthwith *organized*, in name, in principles, in purſuit, the ſame with its original, but in form approaching yet more nearly to the caſt and figure of the French Aſſembly. Its officers were almoſt the ſame; the dignity and the powers of

of its Preſident were an exact miniature likeneſs; and, leſt even a ceremony ſhould be wanting, the ſignal for profound ſilence with which all were bound implicitly to comply, was *the putting on of the Preſident's hat.* It had, alſo its Committees, not only of accommodation and correſpondence, but of *Conſtitution and Finance*, and it had already, by anticipation, the ſymbol of Republican Ireland (the ſame as on the buttons of its life-guards) as a ſeal to authenticate its acts. In a word it appears to have been not the mere model of what was intended but an actual proviſional Conſtitution, put together in frame work, and as if placed upon rollers, juſt ready to be ſhoved into the place of the old Conſtitution, the very moment its demolition could be effected and its ruins cleared off.

But was all this ponderous machinery an expedient ſuggeſted by *diſtreſs?* Were they, who had projected it, the wretched and the unfortunate? Had they eloped from Baſtiles, or were they made deſperate by confiſcations? Were they not on the contrary in profitable trades, if not already in opulent circumſtances? If thoſe of them who were in genteel profeſſions (and ſuch perhaps formed a numerous part), were not in all inſtances as eminent in their way as ſome others, ſurely they could not accuſe the Government on that account. No act of Parliament debarred

debarred them from taking fees either from clients or patients. What then made them ſo very miſerable? We can only reply, that they were ſick of the ſame diſeaſe with their brethren at Belfaſt, they were politically hypocondriacal; they imagined their heads too big for the ſituation they were in, and they only wanted to pull down the Government and the Conſtitution, that they might have room to move about at pleaſure.

It would be impoſſible to ſpeak ſeriouſly of theſe planet-ſtruck politicians, were it not that the ridicule excited by their motives is loſt in indignation at the wickedneſs of their expedients. To effect a purpoſe in which the height of folly mingles with the height of crime, as the monkey with the tyger, in Voltaire's picture of his countrymen, they call the unharneſſed volunteers to re-muſter and re-arm; they baſely and barbarouſly attempt to debauch the ſoldiery, beſeeching them as "partaking the paſſions and "intereſt of the people," to remember, "that "they were *once* Citizens—that *ſeduction had* "*made them Soldiers*, but that nature had made "men;" and they ply the populace throughout the kingdom with unceaſing manifeſtoes, artfully adapted to meet their feelings, and raiſe their paſſions to madneſs, with the hope of a golden age,

age, if only a democratic Revolution could be once accompliſhed.

To give force to ſuch applications, it was neceſſary, if they could not explain their own diſtreſſes, at leaſt to mention ſome as felt by the multitude; and they make an attempt to do ſo in the laſt Addreſs they ever dared to publiſh. This, they truſted, would remain as an inſerted ſting in the minds of the publick; and on ſuch an occaſion they would of courſe collect their whole ſtore of venom. What then do they produce? What political grievances of the lower ranks do they point out as reaſons why the poor ſhould aſſiſt them in revenging their wrongs? Neither more nor leſs than the *Game Laws*, the *Stamp Act*, and the *Criminal Code!* Theſe three are the ſole inſtances of Tyranny which thoſe ſharp-ſighted Politicians could enumerate, when for once they deemed it neceſſary to leave the vague generalities of declamation, and make ſome attempt at ſtating particulars.

Was there ever a more concluſive teſtimonial given to the Legiſlation of a Country? Or could there be a more deciſive proof, that there were in fact no political grievances which could be ſpecified; and that whatever diſtreſſes the lower ranks might feel, they could not by all the acuteneſs of malignity, be brought home to the Law

or

or the Conſtitution? Of the inſtances that are adduced, the two firſt are ridiculous: Who can imagine that the Game Laws abridge, even accidentally, the comfort of a ſingle cottage in the community? And the Stamp Tax, it is well known, is laid on in this country with the moſt attentive care leſt it ſhould bear heavy on the poor. If the general equity of its principle needed any ſanction, it has had one lately, in being adopted even by the republican legiſlature of America.

But there was at leaſt no abſurdity in bringing forward the Criminal Law: It lay directly in the way of the Gentlemen themſelves, and afforded an argument appoſite to the cauſe, and in character with the object: This, therefore, they dwell upon, while they did little more than mention the others.—" We ſhall refer," ſay they, " to a much more important ſyſtem, the Cri- " minal Code. If the lower claſſes of the com- " munity had been repreſented in Parliament " when their neceſſities firſt urged them to in- " ſurrection and outrage under the denominati- " ons of White Boys and Defenders, Parliament " would have enquired into and redreſſed their " grievances, inſtead of making laws to puniſh " them with death. The acts which are prohi- " bited by *many* of our laws are crimes, but the " puniſhments inflicted by thoſe laws are *greater*

" *crimes:* The reaſon of this great diſproportion " is, that the rich man is never guilty of ſheep-" ſtealing, and the poor man,"—(i. e. the ſheep-ſtealer*, who of courſe was to have been ſpecifically repreſented in the projected Legiſlature), " has no one to plead his cauſe in the Senate."

I have given this paſſage at large, becauſe I conceive it to be a maſter-key to all the myſteries of Defenderiſm, and that it would of itſelf account for every miſchief that has enſued. The authors of it muſt have been conſcious, that they could hope for nothing from the quiet and virtuous in any rank, when they took this method of fraternizing with all the thieves and robbers and murderers in the country. To all others the argument was inapplicable; but with theſe it was infallible. Circulated as it was through every haunt of vice, the ruffian of whatever deſcription, would at once, on the reading or the hearing of it, ſtart up a politician. The midnight vagabonds who had aſſociated to purſue ſome contraband traffic, or perpetrate ſome private revenge, would inſtantly ſee their horizon enlarged, be attracted by a new object, and begin to glow with enthuſiaſtic ardour to demoliſh the Conſtitution. Here, villains of every deſcription, from the

" The ſhout of whiſkey" ſaid Mr. Grattan once in a lucid interval " will return the members of the ſenate and elect a *felonious* repre-" ſentation."

the callous highwayman to the trembling pick-pocket, would find a combining principle, a common rallying point, and would feel as forcibly as any of their brethren whether in Belfaſt or Dublin, that "*with a Parliament thus reformed*, EVERY THING WOULD BE EASY, *without it*, NOTHING COULD BE DONE." Thus enlightened they would naturally look up to their friends and patrons who had ſo kindly ſympathized with their grievances, and were ready to lead them on to liberty and happineſs; and in thus looking, they would find every principle they had learned, illuſtrated by example. Thoſe who were already in combination would ſee a body like themſelves, bound together by an ambiguous *oath*, and ſhrouded in a veil of darkneſs, through which none but approved and atteſted brethren were permitted to penetrate: And thoſe who had not yet aſſociated, could hardly fail to comply with the earneſt exhortation already ſent abroad by the parent Society, entreating their countrymen to "follow their example, and form *ſimilar* Soci-"eties in *every quarter of the kingdom.*"

I now call upon every man of common ſenſe and common humanity to declare whether an addreſs of this kind, ſo directly applied to the worſt paſſions of the worſt men, was not, in every point of view, as cruel, as villainous, as infernal a contrivance, as ever was ſuggeſted by political

 depravity;

depravity;—whether this, alone, does not exhibit the true and real ſource of that ſpirit of diſaffection and conſpiracy by which the country has been convulſed;—and whether on the whole, it is not ſelf-evident that the Society of United Iriſhmen has been the Parent Tree of Sedition and Treaſon, and that all the various combinations which have ſhewn themſelves in different parts of the community, are but mere ſuckers from its roots.

ESSAY XI.

JULY 12, 1796.

MY readers may perhaps be ſurpriſed at my ſtating ſo many particulars about a Society which no longer appears amongſt us. It is true, that that Society is to appearance diſſolved; and they who compoſed it, no longer dare to ſend forth their manifeſtoes openly and avowedly through the country. But it may juſtly be feared that the diſpoſition and views of the individuals continue the very ſame as before, that the venom inſtilled into the popular mind ſtill operates, and, that of courſe there is as great neceſſity for providing antidotes againſt this lurking poiſon at this day, as there was while the Society was in acknowledged exiſtence.

It is for this reaſon that I proceed to conſider more particularly a part of their conduct which I conceive to be even more villainous than the attempts to ſeduce the ſoldiery, or to attach the ruffians of the community to their intereſt. I mean their endeavours to perſuade all the diſtreſſed

treſſed poor throughout the kingdom that their poverty and wretchedneſs have ariſen ſolely from the preſent Government and Conſtitution, and that by overthrowing theſe they would obtain infallible relief from all their grievances at once.

" Do you," ſay they to the lower claſſes, " find yourſelves ſunk in *poverty* and *wretched-*
" *neſs?* Are you overloaded with *burdens* which
" you find yourſelves little able to bear? Do
" you feel many grievances which it would be
" tedious and perhaps *unſafe* to mention? Be-
" lieve us THEY CAN ALL BE REDRESSED by
" *ſuch a Reform as will give you your juſt propor-*
" *tion of influence in the Legiſlature,* and BY SUCH
" A MEASURE ONLY."

I have already had occaſion to dwell ſo much upon the obvious views of theſe men, that I am abſolutely ſick of the ſubject. I ſhall therefore, leave the reader to form his own concluſions, from the ſtyle and manner of this addreſs reſpecting the motives of thoſe from whom it proceeded, and ſhall confine myſelf to the following plain queſtion: Is there any truth in the aſſertion that the poverty and wretchedneſs which are to be found in this country ariſe from the faults of the preſent Conſtitution; or might it be expected that if theſe gentlemen had gained their point, they would have been able to make good their engagements?

I have

I have already obſerved, that when it was peculiarly incumbent on them to be explicit with reſpect to grievances, they mentioned nothing more than the *Game Laws*, the *Stamp Act*, and the *Criminal Code*. When they named theſe only, was it for the reaſon given above, becauſe " it would have been tedious and perhaps *unſafe* to be more particular?" The tediouſneſs might have been avoided by mentioning only thoſe that were moſt intolerable. And as to *danger*, it is inconceivable that they ſhould deem it hazardous to ſtate particular grievances, when, at the ſame moment, they were urging the overthrow of the whole Conſtitution. The only danger they could apprehend, was that of attempting to adduce what could not be ſubſtantiated. And in fact, what Law could they poſſibly have brought forward, the repeal of which would enable the cottager at a twelve month's end to purchaſe a new coat, or an additional blanket for his bed?

If the preſent Conſtitution were the cauſe of national unhappineſs, that unhappineſs would neceſſarily extend more or leſs over the whole kinddom; becauſe the *whole nation* being ſubject to the influence of the Conſtitution, the effects ariſing from that influence muſt be as extenſive as the cauſe. But will even the effrontery of faction aſſert, that miſery appears generally throughout

out the nation? Will any man who has underſtanding, who has eyes, ſubſcribe to ſo ſhameleſs a falſehood? If inſtances of diſtreſs exiſts are they not clearly confined to ſome particular places, while commerce, manufacture and agriculture are almoſt every where elſe extending and encreaſing. What follows? Evidently that the diſtreſs complained of ariſes from accidental cauſes, and not from the Government or the Conſtitution.

But it will be ſaid that *Poverty* in ſome degree or other prevails throughout the whole kingdom. True. And it has prevailed in every kingdom and in every age. The world has continued at leaſt ſix thouſand years, and no ſpecific has yet been diſcovered for this univerſal malady. The Revolution has not aboliſhed it in France; it is only the ſmalneſs of population and the vaſt extent of territory, that prevents its growth in America; and the extended commerce, the countleſs manufactures, the widely diffuſed comfort, and five millions annually expended in ſtated and occaſional relief, have not aboliſhed it in England. It is the inevitable reſult of full population, and nothing like a radical cure has ever been ſuggeſted for it, except, perhaps, that propoſed by Citizen Bo:—"Be of good cheer, ſays "he, France has enough for twelve millions of "people;

" people; the reſt of the inhabitants muſt be put " to death, and then proviſions will be cheap."

If the Iriſh Democrats ſhould not wiſh to avail themſelves of this humane ſuggeſtion, (whether they would or would not, heaven beſt knows) I ſhould be glad to learn how they would ſet about the abolition of poverty? They would, of courſe, in the firſt inſtance reform the Parliament; that is, they would eſtabliſh a Legiſlative Aſſembly, choſen annually by all the males in the community. But this would not operate like a charm; the poor man's fire would not burn more brightly, nor his meal of potatoes be a whit more ſavoury, merely becauſe he had a thouſandth ſhare in the three hundredth part of a new legiſlature. His happineſs would ſtill depend on what this new legiſlature could effect in obtaining for him a deliverance from felt diſtreſſes, and an increaſe of actual comfort.

Suppoſe the Democratick Senate actually in a committee of ways and means for the abolition of *poverty* and *wretchedneſs*. Hope would be high-raiſed in the hungry multitude, and *Sans Cullottes* of every deſcription would be preſſing into the gallery, thronging every avenue with anticipatory tranſports at the plenty which was to drop from the heavens, or burſt through the earth, at the call of their wonderful

 repreſentatives,

repreſentatives; while unfortunate Ariſtocrats would be knocked on the head at every corner, for having ſo long kept them from happineſs. But what would the ſages do to realize the expectation they had excited? It is fair to put the queſtion; in all their addreſſes I do not recollect one ſingle intimation of any ſpecific meaſure: And this is the more extraordinary, as, although they might not have had liberty to *act*, they had full liberty to *think* as they pleaſed, and to mature their ſchemes againſt the expected moment of power. Would they then reſolve at once to make the working claſſes independent of labour, and give them an unlimited credit on the national purſe? Or could they hope to ſecure them againſt the caſualties incident to their ſtation, by a decree againſt ſickneſs and old age, againſt the uncertainty of the ſeaſons and the froſts of the winter, and alſo againſt all vice, and folly and idleneſs? For ſo long as theſe natural and moral cauſes operate, the working claſſes muſt inevitably be ſubject to infinite diſtreſſes; and the Legiſlature which would effectually put an end to them, muſt be able to bind up free agency and new modify the laws of nature.

Nothing is more common with half-thinking men, than to confound the evils which ariſe neceſſarily out of the ſtate of civil ſociety, with thoſe which ſpring from a bad Government, or a faulty

a faulty Conſtitution. But to men of common ſenſe the diſtinction will be obvious. There are, and will be, in every community under heaven, deficiencies and inconveniencies, burthens and grievances which no laws can reach, and which of courſe no legiſlature can cure. Of theſe a great part may be palliated, but they cannot be eradicated—Providence has entailed them on our nature. Others may unqueſtionably be remedied, but not by Government; they ariſe from the miſconduct of ſociety, from the wrong exerciſe of general free agency; and it reſts with ſociety by its own voluntary exertions to remove them.

For inſtance, there is perhaps as much diſtreſs in the metropolis as in any one of the four provinces beſides. A great deal of this undoubtedly comes within the claſs of unavoidable misfortune; but a great deal alſo ariſes at this moment from a cauſe equally remote from nature and politicks, I mean the influence of faſhion: The whole tribe of ſtaymakers, for example, muſt now be in extreme diſtreſs, becauſe the female ſex have thought proper to throw off their bodice. The ſilk and ſtuff-weavers muſt be equally wretched, from the univerſal wear of linen and muſlin; the buckle-makers can be little leſs embarraſſed from the general adoption of leather ſhoe-ſtrings; and the unfortunate corps of hair-

dreſſers

dreſſers are conſigned over to miſery and deſpair, by the new generation of *Roundheads*. All theſe together, muſt make up a deplorable maſs of *poverty* and *wretchedneſs*. But is the Government or the Conſtitution to be blamed for this? Or, are the Democrats leſs blamable than any of their neighbours? Do they not enter as deeply into the faſhions of the day as the nobility themſelves? And is not the ſtarvation of the laſt enumerated victims in particular, their own peculiar achievement? Were they now in power, conſiſtency would bind them to denounce the Grecian waiſt, the calico robe, the ſhoe-ſtring, and the crop'd head, as inſtances of inciviſm, and ſymptoms of an anti-revolutionary temper. Perhaps it is to keep their extraordinary humanity in full preſervation for thus exerciſing it as *Rulers* of a *Republick*, that they do not now chuſe to ſquander it while *Subjects of a Monarchy*.

ESSAY XII.

July 16, 1796.

I FIND myſelf unavoidably led, by the ſubject of my laſt paper, to make a few remarks on a publication of the *Whig Club*, which appeared in the *Dublin Evening Poſt* during the courſe of the laſt month. It is ſtated to be a Report from a Committee appointed by that Society to enquire into the ſituation of the labouring poor, and conſiſts of a ſingle reſolution, which I copy verbatim from the D. E. P. of the 14th of June:

"Reſolved, That from the information we "have received from ſome counties in this king-"dom, it appears that the price of labour is not "adequate to the ſupport of the labouring poor "in thoſe counties."

Without meaning the leaſt diſreſpect either to the active or *paſſive* Members of the Whig Club, I cannot help obſerving, that this reſolution, ſtanding ſingly as it does, ſeems to be one of the moſt extraordinary publications that ever appeared

peared in the motly pages of a newſpaper. It ſpeaks of information being received, upon which it profeſſes to be grounded, and yet in its manner it betrays a conſciouſneſs that that information was inſufficient, and that it did not warrant explicitneſs. It furniſhes no clue to come at facts by, no hint to direct candid enquiry; and yet it contains enough to ſtrengthen diſcontent, and ſpread diſaffection. In ſhort, were it not that its repeated appearance forbids ſuch a ſuppoſition, it might moſt reaſonably be imagined that it had been publiſhed through miſtake, as it is really little more than the blank form of a reſolution, prepared to be filled up, when particulars ſhould be aſcertained, and occaſion ſhould require.

To what rational end could ſuch an abortion ſerve? It is inconceivable that it ſhould promote any one good purpoſe, and it is certain, that it may be made to anſwer a moſt pernicious one. It bears teſtimony to the exiſtence of an alledged grievance, which has been uniformly reſorted to as an apology for ſedition; and yet the ſtatement is ſo ſtrangely indeterminate as to leave it in the power of the fomenters of diſturbance to apply it to their purpoſe equally in every part of the kingdom. Thoſe lurking agitators may now quote the authority of the *Whig Club*, to the peaſantry of *Down*, *Antrim*, *Tyrone*, *Londonderry*,

ry, juſt as eaſily as thoſe of *Longford*, *Weſtmeath*, or *Roſcommon:* They may produce their uſual oracle, the *Dublin Evening Poſt*, and ſay, "See here, the lords and great men who are "now in *Dublin*, and who would ſay nothing in "your favour, unleſs truth obliged them to ac- "knowledge that you are wronged and abuſed, "and cheated. They ſay this too, though they "know you are juſt now ſtriving to do your- "ſelves juſtice; of courſe even they cannot deny "that you are right, and therefore it cannot be "doubted, but that you'll gain your end at laſt; "you need have no fear that you'll be hanged "now, when theſe great people own you have "juſtice on your ſide."

The lower claſſes, every where, and whatever their ſituation may be, are eaſily enough perſuaded that they are ill-treated by their ſuperiors. They have the ſame paſſions, but not the ſame reſtraints, which operate in the higher ranks of the community. They are as ſelfiſh, and as partial to themſelves, as any of thoſe above them, while from ignorance they are incapable of diſtinguiſhing between their real intereſt, and what only tends to the momentary gratification of their vices or their follies. At this time, (as I have more than once mentioned,) the ſtrongeſt marks of *Defenderiſm* that are to be ſeen any where, ſhew themſelves

ſelves in ſome of the richeſt and happieſt counties, where no wants exiſt but thoſe inſeparable from ſociety. But can it be ſuppoſed that the tubulent there do not find ſome pretexts to juſtify their conduct, to themſelves, and to one another? Can we doubt, but that thoſe of them who pay the loweſt rent, think ſtill that they pay too much; and that they who receive the largeſt wages think they ought to have more? To ſuch, this indefinite reſolution of the *Whig Club* will appear juſt as applicable, and conſequently will be matter of as miſchievous encouragement as to the moſt really wretched cottagers in the province of Connaught.

Let the exiſtence of diſtreſs be ever ſo incontrovertible, yet if inſurrection has become connected with it, though relief ought as far as poſſible ſtill to be afforded, it ought to be done with cautious heſitancy, and the moſt delicate management. The greateſt diſtreſſes which the pooreſt inhabitants of this kingdom are liable to, cannot be ſo bad, ſo really injurious to themſelves, as an habitual ſpirit of inſurgency. But the ſtrongeſt encouragement that can be given to ſuch a ſpirit, is to allow the inſurgents room to think that they have gained their point by their own exertions. *Relief* in this way, however equitable in every other view, inſtead of conferring comfort, cheriſhes vice and miſery, puts

thoſe

thoſe who have received it into a worſe ſtate, on the whole, than they were in before, and makes proviſion for everlaſting outrages and depredations. If then, the *Whig Club* or any other *Club* were ever ſo fully convinced that there was diſtreſs in the Country, and if their eagerneſs to relieve it were ever ſo ardent, ſtill common ſenſe and honeſt policy, and even mere mercy, would point out a quiet ſilent procedure, a ſecret inveſtigation, a rigid abſtinence from publicity, and, (when the time ſhould be ripe for propoſing the meaſure) ſuch a mode of introduction as would have no tendency to connect the idea of relief with that of inſurgency in the minds of thoſe relieved.

It is ſo wonderful that the *Whig Club*, furniſhed as it is with grave and learned men, ſhould overlook, or rather act in the moſt direct contradiction to, theſe obvious principles, that good-nature would be ready to attribute it to their want of experience as a charitable aſſociation.

But farther; let the exiſtence of diſtreſs be ever ſo certain, it is no better than refined cruelty to hold out a proſpect of relief, unleſs it be tolerably certain that the ſcheme of mercy can be realized. Does any ſuch certainty exiſt at preſent? Or is there ground to believe that thoſe who are in diſtreſs could be relieved by any Legiſlative

act? Report says, that the present movements of the *Whig Club* are to pave the way for bringing into Parliament some such plan for regulating the wages of day labourers as has been talked of England. This may certainly furnish a good topic for opposition to display its philanthropy upon; but even at first view its utility appears highly questionable, and its practicability still more so. It is acknowledged that it is only in some places where such a measure could be necessary, that is, where the wages of labourers are unreasonably low. But what causes them to be low in such places? Is it not chiefly the want of employment? The price of labour, like that of every other marketable commodity, finds its own level. Where the work to be done requires all the hands in a country, but no more, then the pay is at its natural medium. When it requires more hands than can easily be had (as is the case in the United States of America) then wages rise proportionably. When it can be done by fewer hands, as is the case in the districts in question, the market of labourers becomes glutted, and the price falls accordingly. What then will a law for regulating wages avail, so long as there is not sufficient employment? We see now, in the far greater part of this kingdom, where there is enough of labour, that no such law is requisite; and by parity of reason, where there is not enough of labour, it will not be effectual.

It may even injure inſtead of ſerving; becauſe it may make the little labour, which even as it is keeps the cottager from ſtarving, ſtill leſs. If low as the wages are, the occupant of land from a hope of greater profit turns from tillage to grazing, when the expence of tillage is encreaſed by law his motive to do ſo will be ſtill ſtronger. The only rational proſpect of relief muſt ariſe from the increaſe of tillage, which will remedy the evil by furniſhing employment. And any law, however ſpecious, which would check the progreſs of tillage, would be a curſe inſtead of a bleſſing. But were ſuch a law to be enacted, the probability is that it would do neither good nor hurt. Where moſt needed it would be leaſt inforced, and the day-labourer would unite with his employer to elude it. The law could not oblige any one to *employ* labourers, and the unfortunate peaſant would prefer ſix-pence, or even four-pence a-day, to nothing at all.

But the only *preſent* reſource againſt this evil muſt be ſought in the good ſenſe and humanity of the employers; and probably it would have found a remedy in this ere now, if the ſpirit of inſurgency had not been excited. But would any men in their reaſon think of raiſing wages at the call of an armed banditti? The ſuſpenſion of *right* in ſuch circumſtances, if not *juſtice*, is ſomething better; it is *mercy*. Whatever then tends

to promote turbulence, and to put off tranquillity, whether it be an inflammatory ſtatement of grievances from the United Iriſhmen, or an indirect, indefinite ſanction of ſuch ſtatements from the *Whig Club*, can amount to nothing elſe but the enlarging and rivetting of the calamity.

But the cautious tranquillizing plan which I have been recommending would not perhaps have anſwered *all* the purpoſes of the *Whig Club*. It would not have ſerved to furniſh ammunition for the next Parliamentary campaign, or rather for the exhibition of political ſquibs and ſky rockets with which it may be preparing as uſual to annoy adminiſtration and amuſe the populace. It would not have been inſtead of a ſhow-man's pipe and tabor to give notice to the mob of their entertainment for the evening. It would not, in ſhort, have been a ſubſtitute for any of thoſe hacknied expedients by which oppoſitions uniformly ſeek to obtain that degree of popularity, which may ſerve as a *fulcrum* for the *lever* that is to raiſe themſelves to power.

In tranquil times, when ſociety was in its natural ſtate, ſuch tricks and ſtratagems might have been pardonable, becauſe they were likely to be followed by no very ſerious conſequences. But *now*, when doctrines unknown to our fathers, have put public peace and ſafety in jeopardy, when

when political madneſs is juſt as epidemic, and where it riſes to its height is juſt as deſtructive as ever the peſtilence was in the centuries that are paſt, and when even amongſt ourſelves there are alarming ſymptoms, which can only be ſuppreſſed by the ſtricteſt union and ſteadieſt co-operation of knowledge and talent, of wiſdom and virtue, at ſuch a time to ſcatter ambiguous words amongſt the vulgar, to ſeek for a little popular favour by appearing to flatter a falſe and dangerous miſconception, to leave room, by laxity of ſtatement and vagueneſs of expreſſion, for the enemies of the country to infer, that their premiſes are admitted even by thoſe who revolt from their practical concluſions, is a conduct which muſt excite aſtoniſhment in all who have underſtanding, and ought to raiſe the indignation of every man who has a heart.

But the extravagance of the folly lies in this, that all will be unavailing. The well-affected and judicious part of the community will ſee through and reprobate the clumſy juggle, and the *Democrats*, who have long ſhewn a fixed purpoſe not to be cajoled by any partial approximation, will deſpiſe it in their hearts. That theſe hate *all* who diſagree with them can ſcarcely be doubted; but the cream of their malice ſeems to be kept for the *Oppoſition*. They abhor theſe in proportion to the cloſeneſs of reſemblance, juſt

as

as the fierceſt antipathies ſometimes reign between animals of the neareſt ſpecies: And moſt probably, were a Democratic Revolution now to be effected, thoſe very gentlemen of the *Whig Club* would be amongſt the firſt who would be promoted to the Guillotine or the Gibbet. It would not be amiſs for them to keep this in mind, and to recollect that though they may not be quite as happy as if they were in power, and though this may lead them to ſee things around them through ſomewhat of a gloomy medium, (as a man who has the jaundice ſees every thing tinged with yellow) ſtill, that it might be far worſe with them than it is, that it is better to be without *places* than to be without *eſtates* and without *heads*; and that (as SOLOMON ſays,) "A living Dog is better than a dead Lion."

ESSAY

ESSAY XIII.

ADDRESSED

TO

COUNTRY GENTLEMEN,

AND

OTHER PERSONS OF PROPERTY

IN THE

NORTH OF IRELAND.

DEC. 12, 1796.

GENTLEMEN! What are you doing? your country demands your ſtrenuous and united exertions. A plan for preſerving it alike from invaſion and inſurrection, by aſſociating and arming the loyal Yeomanry, has been propoſed, and has received the approbation of every honeſt and ſenſible man. Are *you*, in your ſeveral diſtricts, uſing your beſt ſkill and influence to carry this ſcheme into immediate and effectual execution?

Gentlemen,

Gentlemen, if you are not active, your enemies are. The men who wiſh to overturn the conſtitution, the deſperate few who hope, by means of the miſled many, to ſhare amongſt themſelves the power and the property of the kingdom, are indefatigable, muſtering their forces by night, diſſeminating their principles by day, at fairs and markets, on the high road and in the hedge alehouſe, in the tradeſman's ſhop and the peaſant's cottage. No expedient eſcapes them that ſubtlety can ſuggeſt. To inſpire awe and ſecure ſecrecy, they have ſealed their combination with the abuſed religion of an OATH. To excite vulgar curioſity, they affect profound myſterioufneſs, and aſſume ſignificant words and ſigns, underſtood only by their ſworn aſſociates. That they may pervert the timid as well the vicious, they have recourſe equally to threatenings and promiſes. And to attach the idle and the indigent, they hold out the proſpect, that if their deſign was once accompliſhed, the wealth and comfort which they repreſent as now unjuſtly monopolized by a few, would flow down even amongſt the loweſt of the people, in rich and ceaſeleſs abundance.

Could any thing be contrived with more villainous ingenuity both to attract the ignorant multitude in the firſt inſtance, and to inſure their aid in every deſperate meaſure, to which their leaders

leaders might wiſh to direct them? An enthuſiaſm ſo congenial to every profligate and every fooliſh propenſity, could not fail to ſpread amongſt the lower claſſes; and a populace actuated by ſuch a ſpirit and combined by ſuch principles, if once ſtrong enough to burſt forth, would as certainly deſtroy all ſafety, and make a wreck of all property, as a flood of *Lava* iſſuing from a burning mountain, would be ſure to deſolate the ſurrounding country. Form to yourſelves the idea of ſuch an event; and then aſk your own underſtandings, whether in theſe circumſtances, your moſt valuable acquiſitions, the deareſt comforts of your life, or even your life itſelf, would be worth a day's purchaſe?

Already has the miſchief ſpread from an inconſiderable ſociety to an unſummed multitude; it has gone on from pariſh to pariſh and from county to county, like "the peſtilence that walketh in darkneſs;" and freſh numbers of the peaſantry are every day catching the contagion. If no effectual check be provided, is it not ſelf evident, that it will advance incalculably; forming ſtill a wider and a wider circle, until the malignant principle ſhall have diffuſed itſelf through all the lower ranks of the community?

Gentlemen, is it poſſible, that any individual amongſt you ſhould look with unconcern on ſo

alarming a proſpect? Believe me, on you alone it depends to realize or defeat it. There is but one infallible expedient for coming at the root of the evil; and that is, by plainly proving to them and to all whom they are labouring to ſeduce, that the *people* are againſt them as well as the government and the laws, that all that is rational, virtuous, or reſpectable in the community are agreed in deteſting their principles, and are reſolved to counteract and cruſh their projects by a *union* and *co-operation* as firm for the preſervation, as theirs for the deſtruction, of property, of liberty, and of life.

For ſuch a *union* and *co-operation* the plan of the aſſociated Yeomanry furniſhes the faireſt and moſt promiſing opportunity. And in the conduct of ſuch of you, as have exerted themſelves to give it effect, as well as in the ſignal ſucceſs which has attended their endeavours, I diſcover a chearing pledge of re-eſtabliſhed order, of reanimated credit, of annihilated rebellion.

Till now, thoſe who call themſelves *United Iriſhmen* had but too much room to perſuade their followers, that placemen and penſioners and writers for Government newſpapers, were the only perſons in the country who were decidedly againſt them. "If the independent men," they might ſay "and the reſpectable Yeoman-"ry of Ireland were diſpoſed to reſiſt us, they "would

" would learn from our example to unite with " one another to counteract our plans; they do " no such thing, they suffer us to proceed with- " out almost the shadow of efficient opposition. " They of course wish us success, or they are " neutral, or they think opposition fruitless. In " either case we have little to fear; the Military " or Militia may march against us because they " are commanded; but if the rest of the com- " munity be our friends, or at worst mere look- " ers on, the conflict will be short, and our vic- " tory certain." Such assuredly have been their statements, and when the peasant and day-labour- or on whom they were urged, neither saw nor heard any thing to contradict them, could they hesitate to become partners in so promising an undertaking, so irresistible an enterprize?

But in proportion as the yeomanry associations extend, the deception will vanish. The dema- gogues will see, that the constitutional spirit of the country was not dead, as they had fondly deemed; but that it only slumbered that that their insolence hath awoke it. Bodies of gentry and yeomanry, voluntarily formed for the defence of the Constitution and the Laws, as well against factious insurgents as foreign invaders, will speak a language which the dullest must comprehend, and the most obstinate be unable to refute. Al- ready they have shewn how fully they feel its

force by the threats and execrations with which their publications teem. And on their own principles they are right. In the re-invigorated circulation of conſtitutional ſentiments, and the rekindled ardour of loyal feelings, which this ſafe and ſalutary fraternization will extend through the country, they anticipate the ſure decay of their own deluſive influence, and in the clang of arms, taken up at once ſpontaneouſly and loyally, they hear the knell of their high-fed hopes. If the undertaking needed a teſtimonial, *their* reprobation of it would be a deciſive proof of its value and utility.

Yes, I repeat it; to thoſe ſpirited and judicious men who have come forward in this equal exerciſe of patriotiſm and humanity, the country will, in all human probability, be indebted for its ſafety, and perhaps for its exiſtence. But what ſhall we ſay of thoſe who ſtill ſtand aloof, and do nothing, though they acknowledge the wiſdom of the meaſure, and the preſſing exigence of the occaſion; and though they are reſtrained by no one difficulty, which thoſe who are now moſt ſucceſsful, did not feel at the beginning?

But inſtead of cenſuring I ſhall expoſtulate. I aſk you, then, who are indolent, while others around you are active, whether the preſent ſituation of the country (the internal dangers of which

which are at this moment aggravated by the threats of invaſion) does not demand the exertions of all its well diſpoſed inhabitants? If it does, what would be the conſequence, if all perſons of property followed your example? Could you conceivea more infallible method of deſtroying themſelves and the community? Grant even that there ſhould be no invaſion, that you had nothing to apprehend except from faction at home; ſtill, if you ſit inactive by your fire-ſides, while the malcontents are buſied in diſſeminating their principles, and maturing their plans, what can you look for, but their infallible ſucceſs, and your own inevitable ruin? Look impartially at the conſequences of ſuch a conduct, and ſee whether you can vindicate it for one moment at the tribunal of your reaſon and your conſcience?

Are you reſtrained by *fear*, by the apprehenſions of injury to your properties or your perſons? Think, I pray you, on the folly of yielding to this unworthy principle. If you are afraid now, what will become of you hereafter? Confine not your view to the dangers of the preſent moment, when ſo much greater dangers may be rapidly approaching. Reſiſtance to popular violence muſt always be attended with ſome riſk; but the longer the evil is winked at, it muſt ſtill acquire greater ſtrength, and oppoſition to it be of courſe attended with ſtill greater hazard. Is it

not

not then the height of madneſs, by puſillanimous forbearance, to nurſe the infant ſedition into an irreſiſtible ſtrength, of which *you*, no leſs than your neighbours, muſt be the helpleſs victims?

Strange as at firſt view it may appear to you, I heſitate not to aſſert, that the greater you conceive your preſent danger to be, the more preſſing neceſſity is there, for your facing it at once. Becauſe, the greater malevolence your enemies diſcover *now*, the more certain you are of your own ruin, if by your timidity you ſuffer them to gain a power of injuring you equal to their will. You now fear your houſe being broke, or your barn, or ſtable, or turf-ſtack, or hay-ſtack being burnt, and therefore you'll do nothing. Do you not ſee, that by this means you tell them in the plaineſt terms, "you are the ſtrongeſt, and "you may do as you pleaſe?" But by thus ſurrendering at diſcretion, are you ſafe? Will houſe-breakers and houſe-burners when once in the plenitude of power, ſuffer you to live undiſturbed in return for your neutrality? Will not even *they* deſpiſe you for your cowardice, while they will hate you for what they know you wiſhed to do if you had dared; and will they not of courſe deal out as hard meaſure to you as to the moſt active of your neighbours? Think whether the reprieve of a few weeks, which you now ſo meanly purchaſe, will be then any very ſubſtantial conſolation.

You

You have perhaps received threatening letters, telling you of the vengeance which awaits you if you proceed in the performance of your duty. Prove that you deſpiſe them, and ten to one you will receive no more of them. Liſten to them, ſhew by your conduct that they have had their effect, and in all probability you will next be told, that if you do not leave a ſum of money under a certain ſtone, or if you don't deliver up your arms without aſking queſtions to a certain perſon who will come to a fixed place by night to receive them, or perhaps if you do not take the United Iriſhman's Oath, or a hundred other ſuch things (for there need be no end to them, if you encourage them by your fear) your houſe will be burnt and your ſtock deſtroyed. Is it not then infinitely better, even on the ground of preſent ſafety, to act at once a manly and decided part? By doing ſo you will animate the well-diſpoſed around you (who may probably at this moment be only waiting for your call) you will fix the wavering, and you will diſhearten your enemies. When you have thus prepared yourſelves to act in concert, and the malcontents ſee a phalanx formed againſt them, reſt aſſured they will ſhrink from the conflict; and *your* perſons and properties will probably be the ſafeſt in the country. The experience of all ages has proved that in times of danger the chances are infinitely in favour of the reſolute and the undaunted.

But

But even in the moſt zealous efforts you will be liable to fail, if you do not proceed with judgment as well as activity. The ſeeds of the miſchief lie in the *minds* of the lower claſſes, and you muſt work upon their reaſon or you will ſtrive to little purpoſe. It is not enough that you ride haſtily through your tenantry, or the tenantry of the perſon for whom you are in charge, and tell them, "On ſuch a day you muſt all come to me "and take the oath of allegiance." No, you muſt talk to them calmly, hear their objections with patience, and in plain and diſpaſſionate language ſhew them the intereſt they have in maintainance of public order and that regular adminiſtration of juſtice, by which the meaneſt and the loweſt are protected as well as the richeſt and the greateſt, and preſs upon them the wickedneſs and the madneſs of deſtroying trade, ſtopping the courſe of induſtry, and letting looſe violence and rapine and murder; all which you may eaſily prove to them muſt inevitably ariſe from a ſucceſsful invaſion from abroad, or from the aſcendency of houſe-breakers and houſe-burners and midnight aſſaſſins at home.

To ſuch views no honeſt man will long be inſenſible. The oath of allegiance, taken in conſequence of being convinced of ſuch truths, will be the proper and natural antidote againſt the poiſon couched in the inſidious oath of the *United*

United Iriſhmen. And by thus confirming the tie by which all good ſubjects are bound to the King and the Laws, and uniting them to each other in a mutual league for their own and their country's protection, you will give a new energy to the body politick, before which every attempt, whether of ſedition or invaſion, will be abaſhed and diſcomfited.

Gentlemen, I congratulate the country that this good work is well and happily begun. In the name of God, let it not ſtagnate with any one of you. Any force will ſuffice to plunder and enſlave you, while you remain indolent, inſulated individuals; active and united you may bid defiance to the world. Reſiſt not then for one day longer, the imperious call of honour, of intereſt, of humanity, of religion. Heſitate not to determine whether you will be the *preſervers* of all you value, and all you love; or the *betrayers* of every truſt that Providence has committed to you, as huſbands, as fathers, and as rational beings.

ESSAY XIV.

ADDRESSED

TO THE

UNITED IRISHMEN,

IN THE

PROVINCE OF ULSTER.

JAN. 6, 1797.

AT this awful moment when an Enemy's fleet is hovering about our coaſts, hoping to carry fire and ſword and devaſtation through this hitherto peaceful country, is it poſſible that any perſons ſhould be cold and unconcerned? Or worſe ſtill, is it poſſible that any ſhould be diſaffected and ill-diſpoſed, flattered with the proſpect, that in the general confuſion a revolution might be brought about, and the Conſtitution be new modelled according to the wiſhes of the *United Iriſhmen?*

Whoever you are, that harbour ſuch a thought, and who in that expectation wiſh the French to come, or intend if they were here, not to reſiſt them,

them, I tell you, you are purſuing an infernal Will 'ith the wiſp, into a gulph without a bottom. You may delude yourſelves with ten thouſand fancies, but if you think to gain any one object from the French ſucceeding in their plan of invaſion, except deſolation and miſery to your country and to yourſelves, (miſery of which neither you nor your children, nor perhaps your children's children might ſee the end) you are the moſt infatuated mortals on the face of God's Earth.

Suppoſe for a moment that what your leaders tell you, of the grievances you ſuffer, were true; ſtill, could you perſuade yourſelves that you would find a remedy for thoſe grievances in the introduction of an army of foreign invaders? Such acts of madneſs have been committed; but what followed? Hiſtory will tell you that in every ſuch caſe, the wretched country was in the firſt inſtance deſolated by wars, which raged on till they went out like a fire for want of fuel, and in the end, the foreigners became maſters of the ſoil, and made "hewers of wood and drawers of water" of thoſe who had let them in.

Iriſhmen! have you forgot the annals of your own country, the ſtories of old times, with which, when you were in a happier temper of mind, you uſed to amuſe one another at the winter fire-ſide? Would you now with your eyes open, put yourſelves in the ſtate in which your forefathers were,

when from their quarrels amongſt themſelves the Danes got into the country, and became the lords and maſters of the natives? Do you think that human nature is not the ſame now that it was then; and that the French, if once let in amongſt you with arms in their hands, and in a ſtate to give law, would not be juſt as inſolent and overbearing to *you*, as the Daniſh ſoldiers were to your anceſtors? But let them do as they pleaſed, you would be at their mercy: All your reſource would be to ſend a pitiful deputation to the French aſſembly to implore compaſſion, and wait in trembling ſuſpence till it ſhould decide upon your fate. Such at this inſtant is the degraded condition of the Netherlands and of Holland. * Would you then, ye deluded Iriſh, if it were in your power, add yourſelves, as one more, to the enſlaved dependents of thoſe headſtrong, haughty demagogues? Would you, I ſay, part at once with your ſucceſsful induſtry, your high-road ſecurity, your fire-ſide comforts, your real independence, to be for once, in the honey-moon of your new alliance, greeted with a fraternal embrace, and have your meſſengers admitted to the honours of the ſitting?

But the comfort is, that after all, the doom of your country is not in *your* power, and that as

* And ſuch at this inſtant, (Sept. 29, 1798) is the condition of the ill-fated Switzerland, over whoſe miſeries the good *Lavater* has juſt poured forth his pathetic and heart-rending complaint.

as matters actually ſtand, this horrid proſpect is but a frightful dream. Neither you nor the French to help you, would be able by your utmoſt, united efforts to produce more in the political ſtate of this kingdom than a ſhort-lived diſturbance. You may, if you will, lie down flat and let the flood of invaſion roll over your ſluggiſh bodies into the midſt of this rich and flouriſhing province; or, ſtill more loſt to ſenſe, you may yourſelves ſtart up, and help on the havock by frantick inſurrection. But you will end your career in diſappointment and the gibbet. You may injure, deeply injure, the credit, and the comfort of your country. But flatter yourſelves as you may with the deluſion of an Iriſh Republick, the *Iriſh Conſtitutional Monarchy* will be more than a match for you all.

Before you can aboliſh this, you muſt ſink Great Britain in the ocean, or you muſt ſhove Ireland off its rocky foundations, and ſail it down to the French coaſt, or out half way to America. Placed as you are by the hand of omnipotence, you may work yourſelves into convulſive ſtruggles; but the chain that binds this country to its true intereſt is the chain of Nature; you cannot diſſolve it.

What have you to oppoſe to the wealth of that country, the merchants of whoſe metropolis

lis ſo ſhortly ago came forward with a loan of Eighteen Millions, and an offer of as many more; and a ſingle ſea-port of which, (Liverpool) as a proof of what might be done on an emergency, offered Nine Millions? What have you to oppoſe to that Navy which for a century has rode triumphant on the ocean; to whoſe power at this day hoſtile fleets have ſtruck without firing a gun, and to whoſe extenſion you can place no barrier? What have you to oppoſe to that fervency of Union with which every true Britiſh heart amongſt its maſs of inhabitants would leap forth in concert with their King and Government to aſſiſt the loyalty of Ireland?*

Yes, the loyalty of Ireland. Do you imagine the loyal men are few or impotent, or that if even they ſtood unaided, you would be able to cruſh them at your will? Drop for a moment your ſelf-flattering preſumption, and ſee with your own eyes who your opponents are. They are the whole landed intereſt of Ireland; ninety nine out of an hundred of thoſe who poſſeſs property of one hundred pounds a year and upwards. They are the mercantile intereſt of Ireland,

* How glorioufly has the confidence here expreſſed, been realized in the magnanimity of thoſe gallant regiments of Engliſh Militia, who have ſo nobly ſacrificed their ſafety and comfort to aſſiſt this country in the hour of peril, and who in conjunction with our own native loyalty, form at this moment the impregnable bulwark of Ireland.

Ireland, with a few deſpicable exceptions, of men not merchants in reality but mere aſſumers of the name. They are the reſpectable inhabitants of the metropolis almoſt to a man; gentlemen, merchants, men in profeſſions or in trade, all, not only reſolute in the common cauſe, but actually arming; the very youth of the Univerſity, forſaking for a time, their peaceful ſtudies, and forming themſelves under their own tutors into a military corps, for the defence of their country. They are the humane, the rational, the well principled, the lovers of ſafety and domeſtick comfort, in a word, the men of common ſenſe in every part of the kingdom, who, let their leſſer differences, religious or political, be what they may, know and feel that the exiſtence of every thing they hold dear upon earth depends on the repelling of invaſion from abroad, and the cruſhing of treaſon at home.

And theſe, backed by an army of military and militia ſuch as Ireland never before could boaſt of, and who have already ſhewn an ardour to attack the enemies of their country which cuts up by the roots every hope you might have harboured of their diſaffection to the Conſtitution; by a body of armed yeomanry, horſe, and foot, already not leſs than forty thouſand, ſpreading at this moment, in ſpite of all the efforts of the Demagogues, into places lately the moſt adverſe

adverſe to the meaſure, and certain to ſpread to an extent greater even than that of their genuine predeceſſors, the Volunteers of *Eighty-Two*; and let me add once more, backed by the wealth, the power, the unanimity of the Britiſh Empire.

I aſk again what have you to oppoſe to all this force, which needs only the preſſure of the occaſion to bring it into united action? Will you ſet againſt it, the *wiſdom* or the *ſpirit* of thoſe leaders by whoſe unceaſing exhortations you have been enlightened into diſcontent, and made frantick with the hope of you know not what? Do you even know who they are? Could you fix upon the perſons who ſit in the dark centre of your combination, and regulate its myſteries and its movements? They have ſent amongſt you songs, toaſts, creeds, conſtitutions, all kinds of papers, to induce you to ſtart up and fight for them; but have they let you ſee *themſelves?* No; while they wiſh you to run your necks into an halter to ſerve their infernal views, they themſelves ſkulk behind; ſo that if the game ſhould in the end go againſt them, they may eſcape to France or America, and leave you, whom they have deluded, to be the ſacrifice*. Would you then commit yourſelves to theſe inviſible champions, and

* Has not this been realized almoſt to the letter, in the ſubmiſſion of ſo many of the leaders of the conſpiracy, and in the confeſſions of *Mc'Nevin*, *Emmet*, and *O'Connor?*

and embark on their blind aſſurances, in deſtroying the peace and ſafety of your country firſt, and being hanged for it afterwards?

Do you truſt to France for permanent aid againſt the maſs of power that would be oppoſed to you? If you do, you are your own deceivers and betrayers. Can you ſuppoſe that the Allies of the abſolute Monarchy of Spain would trouble themſelves for a moment what Government you had, except ſo far as they could make you the inſtruments of their own ambitious purpoſes? I tell you it is not to ſerve *you* but to injure Great Britain that they would come hither; and their one object would be to ſet you all a going in the bleſſed work of butchering one another, and then leave you to your fate.

If you have the ſmalleſt doubt whether their preſent attempt is any thing more than a laſt deſperate effort to ſplit that Empire with which they feel themſelves unable to cope, or if you think that they have any wiſh to ſhare happineſs with you, read their own account of the precious bleſſings they have to impart. I will give it to you in their own words, as they ſtand in a meſſage ſent from their Directory to their Council of Five Hundred on the 10th of the laſt month: It has been publiſhed in all the newſpapers, and I ſolemnly aſſure you every ſyllable of it is their own.

" The multiplied wants of the Republic call " imperiouſly upon you to diſplay and employ " all her reſources. Every branch of the public " ſervice experiences the utmoſt diſtreſs. The " defenders of the country ſuffer all the horrors " of nakedneſs. The hoſpitals are in want of " fuel, medicines, and all other neceſſaries. The " public alms and workhouſes experience the " ſame want; and for this cauſe they reject the " needy and infirm citizens, who uſually found " an aſylum in them. The public roads are im- " paſſable, and the communications interrupted. " From one end of the Republic to the other, " the Judges and Adminiſtrators are reduced to " the dreadful dilemma, either to expoſe them- " ſelves and their families to the utmoſt miſery, " or to ſell themſelves to intriguers. Murder " and aſſaſſination are organized in many places, " and the adminiſtration of police, without ac- " tivity and without force, is unable to check " theſe diſorders."

Gracious heaven! is this the happineſs of Republican France, and are theſe the Allies from whom you have been taught to expect an abſolute heaven upon earth? Uſe your reaſon, my deluded countrymen, and compare the ſtate of things at home with this melancholy picture which your friends in France have drawn of themſelves with their own hand. They by their own

own account are ſunk into the loweſt wretchedneſs; you are riſing more rapidly in all the requiſites of national comfort than any other nation in Europe. You may crack your brains, or break your hearts, becauſe you cannot alter the laws with a *wiſh*, or becauſe you *pay* rent inſtead of *receiving* it, or indeed with equal reaſon, becauſe you have not the ſtrength of Lions or the ſwiftneſs of Eagles; but go to a ſurer ſtandard than your own miſguided fancy. Look back upon the circumſtances of your own neighbourhood twenty years ago. How many of you were then poorly lodged and cloathed, and backward in the world, who are now warm, and independent and money making? Look only at a market or a fair, and ſee the ſtriking difference in the very dreſs of the people *then* and *now*. Caſt your eyes around; ſee how many ſnug and comfortable houſes have ariſen on every hand. Perhaps all circumſtances conſidered, there is not a country in the world which has advanced within the laſt hundred years, as this country has done during the laſt *twenty*. Would you then, if you were left to your own choice, exchange the real advantages you enjoy, and the incalculable increaſe of them to which you may fairly look forward, for that miſery and poverty which the Governors of the French Republic themſelves confeſs to be the portion of their *regenerated* country?

Why are not *you* more rich and more comfortable to-day than you actually are? It is chiefly from this cauſe, becauſe your Country was formerly waſted by war. For the laſt hundred years you have been more free from this ſcourge than any other Nation in the World; and during that time you have been riſing with encreaſing growth from the deſolation of former ages. The Empire with which you were connected, has been at war again and again. But you heard not the roar of battle; your peaceful fields were unpolluted with blood. Sheltered by a defence, to which you merely contributed, but with the ſupport of which you were not burthened, (the *Britiſh Navy*,) you ſat tranquil and ſecure, while Europe has ſhook with repeated hurricanes; but which were ſoftened to a murmur, before they reached your ear. Are you, then, tired of this invaluable exemption, and do you wiſh to be driven back in the courſe of a few months to a ſtate which it will take another century to repair, or more probably may never be repaired? If this be indeed your wiſh, if you prefer wretchedneſs and beggary to rapidly increaſing comfort, you have taken the true means to accompliſh your object; by encouraging a foreign enemy to take advantage of your frantic diviſions; and you will ſeal your doom by now ſitting ſtill, and letting that Enemy get footing in your country.

Iriſhmen

Iriſhmen of the North, who call yourſelves *united*, but who have in truth *conſpired* againſt your own true intereſt, your Country and your God, Heaven has been kinder to you than you have been to yourſelves. The winds, which have diſperſed the *fleet* that hoped to ſurprize this country by the ſuddenneſs of its attack, have left you an happy interval for reflection and repentance. Seize then this valuable opportunity; caſt from you with honeſt ſcorn the wild expectations you have been taught to entertain; and break at once through the villainous engagements which at this moment of peril would make you the betrayers of Ireland. Speak out, ſay, ſwear, (for honeſt men will ſwear what they ſay) that you are ready to repel the foe at the hazard of your lives. Thus may you yet deſerve well of your country. Your return to reaſon will ſave the labour and the bloodſhed of reſiſtance. For the enemy need not be taught, that they might as eaſily cut a way through the centre of the ſolid earth to get at the other ſide of the globe, as penetrate into Ireland through the rampart of a unanimous people.

ESSAY XV.

ADDRESSED

TO THE

UNITED IRISHMEN

IN AND ABOUT BELFAST

WHO JOINED IN THE LATE RESOLUTIONS.

FEB. 1, 1797.

THE alarm for the ſafety of the country having for the preſent ſubſided, it is impoſſible not to pay ſome attention to your particular conduct at the moment of agitation. When the fate of Ireland ſeemed to tremble in the balance, and every honeſt mind was on the ſtretch to avert the impending horrors, you too came forward. But for what purpoſe? Was it to lay down your jealouſies and diſcontents at the altar of national ſafety, and join heart and hand in the meaſures taken for the common defence? No, but it was to counteract the efforts of your better diſpoſed neighbours, and to turn the public occaſion which

which their honeſt zeal afforded you*, into an opportunity of inſulting Government by a propoſal in the very teeth of the laws, and of adding freſh fuel to that flame which your own arts had kindled in the boſom of the community.

I will not aſſert, what has been ſo long ſuſpected, that you yourſelves were the inviters of invaſion and the ſworn allies of the foe. But if you were, how could you have acted more fully up to the character? Cautious as you have ever ſhewn yourſelves meaſuring your every word by the letter of the law, that you might effect the purpoſes without incurring the penalties of ſedition, you would not, at the moſt critical moment of your career, have made the falſe ſtep of premature diſcovery. Had you lighted the beacons of inſurrection before the invaders were even ſure of landing, you would inſtantly have blaſted their projects and your own hopes. Your firſt

* A meeting of the Inhabitants of BELFAST, held on the 31ſt of December, 1796, is here alluded to. It had been convened by the loyal gentlemen of that place, in order to adopt a plan of conſtitutional defence, againſt the then impending invaſion, but the diſaffected, (who were eaſily able to obtain a majority of perſons called *Inhabitants*) perverted it to their uſual purpoſes of counteracting Government, and inflaming the publick mind. The meeting of courſe ended in a ſtring of inſidious reſolutions, one of which was, that "they were ready if permitted by Government, to arm in like "manner as the *Volunteers*" that is, they were ready to *take arms* if they were allowed to do ſo, without any oath of allegiance, or any obligation to military obedience, and in *direct violation* of the proviſions of the Yeomanry act, paſſed a month or two before.

firſt rebellious movement would have called forth a force againſt you, which as yet you could have had no proſpect of reſiſting; and before your foreign friends could have come to your aid, you would have been the victims of your own temerity.

What then could you have done but what you actually did? You ſhewed your followers that you were neither indolent nor wavering; that you were on the watch to ſeize every advantage offered you by the moment, and were ready to go all lengths for the accompliſhment of your object. Should any of them have been embarraſſed with remaining ſcruples, you took a method of ſettling their minds which *Machiavel* himſelf could not have outdone. An offer of arming on terms which you knew beforehand to be inadmiſſible, was a maſter-piece of crooked policy for perſuading your adherents, that being refuſed the means of ſelf protection by Government, they were free in all conſcience, to do what they could for themſelves, and of courſe to form a junction with the invading army.

It might be wiſhed for the credit of human nature, that your conduct could be aſcribed to ſome principle ſhort of ſyſtematic treachery. But is there a ſingle circumſtance to turn the ſcale of opinion even thus much in your favour? Is there in the language you have uſed, one trait of candour,

dour, or the ſlighteſt mark of honeſt though miſguided minds? Is it not on the contrary a clumſy effort of diſſimulation, deteſtable for its intention and contemptible for its execution?

You have aſſerted "that a determination "firmly manifeſted on the part of Govern- "ment," to gratify the popular deſire "would "conciliate the affection of the people whoſe "wiſh is *Reform alone*." In your mouths what is this but the vileſt prevarication; a deſpicable playing on the word *Reform*, which from its looſeneſs of meaning may be applied to any thing from an Octennial Bill up to an abſolute Democracy? You know in your hearts that nothing conſiſtent with the *exiſtence* of the Conſtitution would conciliate you. As United Iriſhmen you ſtand pledged not to reſt ſatisfied with any thing ſhort of *annual elections*, *every man a voter*, and *every man capable of being elected*. You may call this *Reform* if you will; but you would be amongſt the firſt fools in the Univerſe if you were not aware that a ſtab through the heart could not be more fatal to a living animal, than *ſuch* a *reform* would be to the preſent Conſtitution. And we ſhouldbe ſtill greater fools, if after reading your various publications we did not ſee, that your certainty of its being thus fatal to the Conſtitution is the ſole cauſe of your unabating eagerneſs in purſuing it.

On the late occaſion however, you did not deem it to your purpoſe to go beyond an indirect intimation of what *you* meant by *Reform*. You wiſhed to make as large a muſter as you could; and you were aware that ſome would join you in a general wiſh, who were not yet ſufficiently enlightened to adopt your particular definition.

But do you ſuppoſe that any who are acquainted with your practices will not ſee through this deſpicable artifice? Will you perſuade us that you have had no hand in publiſhing, and diſperſing amongſt your fraternity, thoſe books of Democratick Songs*, which inculcate by every mode of addreſs to the imagination and the paſſions, that hereditary legiſlators (ſuch as our King and Houſe of Peers) are hereditary abſurdities and curſes; that the happineſs of mankind depends on the abolition of kings, and prieſts, and thrones, and titles; that the French are the great benefactors of the human race; and that from their aſſiſtance alone, Liberty, and the reſtoration of the Rights of Man are to be expected? I ſtate nothing from hearſay; I have had the execrable volumes in my hands, and ſaw in ſome of them with honeſt indignation, talents which might have been uſefully employed, proſtituted to the moſt infernal purpoſes. Is there one of you who does not know the books I allude to? What then muſt be your hardened

* *Paddy's Reſource.—The Iriſh Harp tuned to Liberty. &c. &c.*

hardened effrontery, after having as you hoped ſufficiently poſſeſſed your own ſworn aſſociates with your real principles, to attempt, by merely ſlipping them aſide like a dark lantern under an aſſaſſin's cloke, and putting on the maſk of ambiguity, to paſs yourſelves off for moderate reformiſts and friends to the Conſtitution!

Will you dare to diſown the publications I refer to, and call for thoſe direct proofs of their being yours which your ſubtlety has made it impracticable to obtain? Then I take you on the ground of an avowed declaration, in which, at a moment when the phrenzy of your zeal overpowered your diſcretion you diſcloſed to us the whole extent of your views. It deeply concerns all who have not a taſte for rapine and maſſacre to pay attention to this, for never before was the real object of ſuch diſturbers of ſociety as yourſelves ſo exquiſitely developed. "In fourwords" ſay you, "lies all our power, *univerſal emanci-*
"*pation and repreſentative legiſlature*, and yet we
"are aſſured, that on the pivot of this principle,
"a *Convention*, leſs, a *Society*, leſs ſtill, a SINGLE
"MAN, would be able firſt to move, and then
"to raiſe the World!"

The expreſſions ſcarcely require a comment. They ſhew at once both your object and your motives with a ſtrength, which no colouring

 could

could heighten. Your wiſh is, that the majority told by the head ſhould elect the legiſlature, in ſuch a manner as to ſecure a conſtant, inevitable, popular controul. And you deſire this, becauſe you think, that if the populace could only controul the legiſlature, you would be ſure of leading the populace, and of courſe be poſſeſſed of unlimited political power. Such, if we can give credit to your own words, is the ſecret ſpring of your pretended patriotiſm. " On the pivot of this principle" you ſay, (that is by means of your plan of *reform*,) " a Convention" (the thing, were you once in power you could call at any time,) " leſs, a Society" (yourſelves the thing you actually are) " leſs ſtill, a ſingle man" (any active citizen who might happen to catch the ear of the mob; the gloomy ſpirit whoſe pen was uſed on the occaſion doubtleſs had himſelf in view,) " would be able firſt to move and then to raiſe the world;" i. e. in the loweſt ſenſe of the words, might do whatever you, or *any* of you who ruled for the hour might wiſh, with law or government, with perſons or property, with individuals or the community.

This is not Republicaniſm; it is not mere Democracy; but it is the high delirium of the very fever of Anarchy. It is what thoſe diſgraces of human nature, *Chabot*, *Danton*, *Marat*, or the wretch *Robeſpierre* himſelf, never had the

the audacity to utter. It is a deliberate preference of the greateſt curſe that can befal ſociety, for the ſake of its moſt deplorable conſequences.

Good God! what the originators of French democracy now look back upon with horror, you, from the very luſt of power, the devil-like ambition of ruling in hell rather than obeying in heaven, have looked forward to with rapturous delight! In portraying the viſions of your perturbed fancy, you have even marked the progreſs which the revolutionary Demon traced for his blood-ſtained Bacchanals, in that devoted country, amid the ruins of human happineſs. There "a *Convention*" put down the monarchy and the conſtitution; "a *Society*" (the Jacobin club) roſe above the convention; and laſt "a *ſingle man*" ruled the Jacobins, the Convention, the Nation. And all "on the pivot" of your very "principle" *Univerſal Emancipation* and *Repreſentative Legiſlature*; a principle which France even already, with her eyes but half open from her ſanguinary debauch, has renounced and reprobated as her peſt and her diſgrace.*

With ſuch a bewitching proſpect in your view; frantic already with the certainty that by the completion of your plan, each of you would be forthwith

* See the Speech of *Boiſſy D'Anglas*, on reporting from the Committee appointed to form the Conſtitution of 1795.

forthwith transformed into a political *Archimedes*, moving even the world at your will, by the omnipotence of your machinery, who could wonder that you ſhould rage and chafe at the checks which the Legiſlature has placed in your way? It was not more extraordinary that you ſhould go mad at the Convention act, the Gunpowder act, the Inſurrection act, and thoſe other acts which never would have been thought of but for *You*, than that a murderer ſhould rage at being deprived of his dagger at the inſtant when he hoped to perpetrate an aſſaſſination.

But whatever hopes you may have had from the calamities of your country, Providence has for the preſent defeated them. Would to God you could yet avail yourſelves of this opportunity for reflection! But if this be impoſſible, if you are loſt to every feeling of juſtice, humanity, and common ſenſe, then I ſay it is the inſtant duty of every man in the community to exert himſelf for his own, his family's and his country's ſafety. Your combination muſt be put down, or the country is undone. To keep terms with you, to heſitate in ſpeaking of you as your enormities deſerve, or in counteracting you by the moſt open and deciſive oppoſition, would be a degree of baſeneſs little ſhort of your own.

Gracious Heaven! To what a ſtate have you already brought this once peaceful province!

Like

Like the firſt deceiver of man you have ſtolen into the retreats of innocence and tranquillity, and changed them by your peſtilent ſuggeſtions into ſcenes of turbulence and guilt. You have robbed the poor of their own peculiar boon from heaven, quiet unambitious reſignation, and have infuſed into their ſimple boſoms the hell that rages in your own. Till your accurſed ſociety exiſted, there was no midnight terror, no wanton cruelty. The wealthy farmer went to his repoſe, and the benighted traveller purſued his way, unſuſpecting and unarmed. But ſince your diſaſtrous riſe, I appeal to any man who knows the country, whether there have not been more houſe-breakings and houſe-burnings, and more attacks upon perſon and property than occurred for an hundred years before? And I aſk farther, where ever you have ſpread, have not violence and outrage, nightly plottings, and dark threatenings been your uniform attendants? If ſuch be the firſt fruits of your labours, what muſt be the fulneſs of your infernal harveſt?

Curſes and diſgraces to ſociety that you are, ſhall you ſtill be ſuffered to go on? Your overt acts *may* and *muſt* be curbed by the iron hand of the law, but the ſource of the evil, the principles you have propagated, can only be ſubdued by the energy of general execration. Fitted as they are to flatter and to feed depravity, congenial with

with every view and hope in which the ruffian of whatever deſcription loves to indulge, ſo far as profligacy extends, they will not fail to attract votaries; and the ſole remedy muſt be a ſteady active counter-union of the wiſe, the reſpectable, and the virtuous. And ſhall this any longer be wanting? Shall not all who are yet uninfected with your contagion, rouſe themſelves however hitherto they may have ſlumbered, and unite as one man with Government and the Legiſlature, in reſcuing their diſhonoured and injured country! What Demoſthenes felt when the Athenian ſtate was on the brink of being betrayed by its own unnatural ſons, is what every good man ought to feel towards *you*. I quote the paſſage at large, that it may be ſeen from the ſtriking coincidence, that the worſt traitors of antiquity were to the very letter, of the ſame caſt and character with yourſelves.

" I was never known" ſays that illuſtrious orator " to march through the city with a face " of joy and exultation at the ſucceſs of a foreign " power. I was never known to receive the " ſucceſſes of my own country with tremblings, " with ſighings, with eyes bending to the earth, " like *thoſe impious men*, who are the defamers " of the ſtate, as if by ſuch conduct they were " not the defamers of themſelves, who look " abroad, and when a foreign Potentate hath

" eſtabliſhed

" eſtabliſhed his power on the calamities of their " country, applaud the event, and tell us we " ſhould take every means to perpetuate that " power.

" Hear me over-ruling heaven, (he goes on) " and let not theſe their deſires be ratified above. " Infuſe a better ſpirit into theſe men; inſpire " even *their* minds with purer ſentiments, this is " my firſt prayer. Or, if their natures are not " to be reformed, purſue them even to deſtruc- " tion. But to us diſplay your goodneſs, in a " ſpeedy deliverance from impending evils, and " in all the bleſſings of protection and tranquil- " lity."*

* *Demoſthenes on the Crown*—concluding words of the Oration.

ESSAY XVI.

REMARKS

ON THE

FIRST PRINTED PROPOSAL

FOR THE

IRISH UNION.

How now you *ſecret*, *black*, and *midnight* fiends
What is't you do?
A DEED WITHOUT A NAME!

MAY 28th, 1797.

AFTER the ſtatements contained in the late Reports of the Committees of both Houſes of Parliament*, it may, at firſt view appear unneceſſary to call the attention of the publick to any new remarks on the treaſon of the *United Iriſhmen.* There is however one point upon which it may not be impoſſible to throw ſome additional light; I mean, the preciſe intention with which that Society was originally formed.

On

* The Reports here alluded to, were thoſe made in the laſt Seſſion of the late Parliament.

On this head, the letter of *Theobald Wolfe Tone*, inſerted in the Report of the Committee of the Commons, affords the moſt ſtriking, and to minds not warped by prejudice, the moſt concluſive evidence. But there is another important document which does not appear to have come before the Committee, and which is, if poſſible, ſtill more demonſtrative of the primary deſign of the IRISH UNION.

To *Tone*'s letter it might perhaps be objected, that being not intended for publication, but merely to be communicated to a few confidential friends, it ſhews the ſentiments of a private perſon, rather than evinces the principles upon which the ſociety of *United Iriſhmen* was actually founded. But the paper to which I refer comes forward under different circumſtances. It is not the mere correſpondence of an individual with a junto of his political intimates; it is a moſt elaborate memoir, compoſed with every aid of fancy and every artifice of language, for the expreſs purpoſe of circulation. It is, in a word, a complete, well digeſted ſtatement of the principles and views of the intended inſtitution; drawn up not only for the information of thoſe who were already friendly to ſuch a deſign, but in ſuch a manner as infallibly to recommend it to all the perturbed and profligate ſpirits in the community.

The date of this memoir* ſeems to be nearly the ſame with that of *Tone*'s letter. It appeared in Dublin, in the month of June, 1791, was cloſely printed on a quarto ſheet, (of which it occupied nearly three pages and an half,) and was handed about in the form of a circular letter, with indefatigable aſſiduity. Its peculiar ſtile, marked throughout with that turbulent and gloomy rhetorick which had diſtinguiſhed the well-known *Helot's Letters*, made it ſcarcely poſſible to doubt, that the ſame hand which had formerly been buſied in ſtimulating the Ulſter Volunteers, was now employed to diffuſe through the kingdom at large, a better concocted and far more deadly poiſon.

I cannot help requeſting my readers to give cloſe attention to the quotations which I ſhall make from this extraordinary compoſition. They will be found to illuſtrate the primary idea and ſpirit of the *Iriſh Union* with a clearneſs, of which all expreſſions but thoſe of the memoir itſelf would fall infinitely ſhort; and I heſitate not to add that they will enable every man of common underſtanding to determine at once, whether the firſt deſign of the inſtitution was limited to a temperate reform of abuſes, or whether on the contrary it did not imply as deſperate a ſyſtem of *Revolutionary Treaſon* as ever was ſuggeſted by profligate ingenuity.

" It

* This paper has been inſerted in the Appendix of the late Report of the Commons of which it forms the third number.

It begins thus: " It is propoſed, that at this " juncture a ſociety ſhould be inſtituted, having " much of the *ſecrecy* and ſomewhat of the cere- " monial attached to *Freemaſonry*; with ſo much " *ſecrecy* as may communicate *curioſity*, *uncer-* " *tainty* and *expectation* to the minds of ſurround- " ing men; with ſo much *impreſſive* and *affecting* " *ceremony* in all its internal œconomy, as with- " out impeding real buſineſs may ſtrike the ſoul " through the ſenſes, and addreſſing the whole " man, may animate his philoſophy by the ener- " gy of his paſſions.

" Secrecy is *expedient* and *neceſſary:* It will " make the band of union more *coheſive*, and the " *ſpirit* of that *union* more *ardent* and more *con-* " *denſed.* It will invelope this *denſe flame* with a " *cloud* of GLOOMY AMBIGUITY, that will both " *facilitate its own agency*, and at the ſame time " *confound* and terrify its enemies by their igno- " rance of the *deſign*, the *extent*, the *direction*, " and the *conſequences:* It will *throw* a *veil* over " thoſe individuals whoſe *profeſſional prudence* " might make them wiſh to lie *concealed* until a " manifeſtation of themſelves become *abſolutely* " *neceſſary*."*

Now

* The reſemblance between this plan for the *Iriſh Union*, and *Weiſhaupt*'s project of the *German Union* is ſo cloſe as almoſt to preclude the poſſibility of its ariſing from mere coincidence. Let the reader compare the above quotations with the following paſſages from

Now, let it be conſidered, that when this plan was ſuggeſted, thoſe ſuppoſed obſtacles to political exertion, which have been ſince ſo often adduced by the malecontents as apologies for their enormities, did not exiſt, nor were even in contemplation. There was no Convention Act, no Inſurrection Act, no treaſonable Correſpondence Act, every mode of communication was open, the war had not commenced, nor was the public mind agitated by any alarm. In theſe circumſtances, (in which there was not merely a liberty, but an abſolute licentiouſneſs of ſcope, both for diſcuſſion and co-operation) can it for a moment be ſuppoſed that men who only wiſhed to effect a temperate Reform in Parliament would have adopted *gloomy, impenetrable ſecrecy* as the firſt feature

from *Weiſhaupt*'s own account of his ſcheme as quoted by *Robinſon*. His words are as follow: 'The ſlighteſt obſervation ſhows that 'nothing will ſo much contribute to increaſe the zeal of the 'members as ſecret union. We ſee with what keenneſs and zeal the 'frivolous buſineſs of Free Maſonry is conducted, by perſons knit 'together by the ſecrecy of their union. It is needleſs to enquire 'into the cauſes of this zeal which ſecrecy produces. It is an univer-'ſal fact, confirmed by the hiſtory of every age. Let this circum-'ſtance of our conſtitution therefore be directed to this noble purpoſe, 'and then all the objections urged againſt it by jealous tyranny and 'affrighted ſuperſtition will vaniſh.—*Robiſon*'s *Proofs* Page 115. Iriſh 'Edition.'

In another place *Weiſhaupt* ſpeaks thus: 'The order wiſhes to be ſe-'cret, and to work in ſilence; for thus it is better ſecured from the 'oppreſſion of the ruling powers, and becauſe this ſecrecy gives a 'greater zeſt to the whole.—*Robiſon*'s *Proofs* Page 132.'

feature of their design? Was it in human nature, thus deliberately to prefer *cowardly ambiguity* to *manly candour*, if it had not been felt that there was an indispensable necessity for such a procedure? And whence could the idea of such a necessity have arisen but from the consciousness of a purpose which would not bear to be disclosed? It is not less the result of uniform experience, than it is the maxim of divine wisdom, "that men love *darkness* rather than *light*, BECAUSE THEIR DEEDS ARE EVIL."

The laws of nature have established an affinity between *ends* and *means*, which vice cannot, and wisdom would not wish to destroy. We might as well conceive the excellent *Howard* going forth on his mission of charity, covered with the mask, and armed with the dagger of an assassin, as suppose that a society, actuated by pure benevolence, and aiming at rational improvement whether civil or political, would have thought of carrying its point by affecting *gloomy ambiguity*, by exciting *uncertainty* and *expectation in the minds of surrounding men*, or by CONFOUNDING and TERRIFYING even its supposed enemies, by their *ignorance* of the *design*, the *extent*, the *direction*, and the *consequences*. Even the revolutionary *Godwin* asks, "Why spread a restless commoti-
"on over the face of a nation, which may lead
"to the most destructive consequences? Why
"seek

" ſeek to beſtow upon truth a weight not its " own ?"* It is only a foul and villainous end that could be attained by ſuch expedients; they are inſtruments which have their ſpecific uſes legibly engraven on them; the choice of them, alone, were there no other evidence, would prove, that *ſyſtematized inſurrection* and *revolutionary deſpotiſm* were, from the firſt moment, the objects of the undertaking.

And for *ſuch* objects, they were well choſen expedients. A *Cataline* or a *Cæſar Borgia* could have ſuggeſted none better. The idea of a ſecret fraternity, ſo formed as to proceed by ſilent and imperceptible, but at the ſame time, infallibly advancing ſteps through the great maſs of the lower claſſes, and ſo ſhrouded in midnight darkneſs as to evade law, elude counteraction, and even defy computation, was itſelf a maſter-piece of revolutionary ingenuity. But the additional proviſion, that this fraternity ſhould not only act as an engine for ſpreading terror and confuſion over the public mind *without*, but ſhould itſelf, by means of an high-raiſed enthuſiaſm, the effect of excited paſſions and " affecting ceremonies," be kept in a ſtate of devotedneſs, at once the moſt implicit and the moſt active, to its own leaders *within*, implied ſuch a refinement of deſpotiſm, over *mind* as well as *body*, over *friend* as well as *enemy*,

* Enquiry into Political Juſtice, Vol. 1. Book 4. Chap. 2. Sec. 3.

enemy, ſuch an exquiſite conjunction of the worſt features of *prieſtcraft*, with the worſt weapons of *tyranny*, as can be inſtanced perhaps but in one other caſe within the annals of the world.

The Reader will perhaps, himſelf, think of the caſe I allude to, that of the well known Nation of Aſſaſſins; between whoſe policy and that of the United Iriſhmen there ſeems to be but this material point of difference, that the former obeyed a ſingle chief inſtead of a junto of leaders. In other reſpects the reſemblance appears ſo cloſe, (eſpecially ſince we have ſeen the plan of the United Iriſhmen developing itſelf into actual practice) that the one inſtitution might almoſt be conſidered as a ſtudied imitation of the other.

The tribe of Aſſaſſins were at their height of power about the thirteenth century, and are much ſpoken of by thoſe writers who have given the hiſtory of the Cruſades. Their Sovereign, who reſided in the faſtneſſes of Mount Lebanon, and from that circumſtance was generally denominated the *Old Man of the Mountain*, was raiſed to that dignity by the majority of the votes of his ſubjects. " Being unable," we are told, " to " defend his nation againſt his powerful neigh- " bours by *open force*, he adopted a more effec- " tual expedient for revenging, if not averting " their attacks: He acquired ſuch an *aſcendant*

" *over his fanatical ſubjects*, that they paid the " *moſt implicit deference* to his *commands*, eſteem- " ed *aſſaſſination meritorious*, aud believed that " by his orders the *moſt ſhocking villainies* were " *conſecrated into heroic virtues.* It was the cuſ- " tom of this Prince, when he imagined himſelf " injured, to diſpatch ſecretly ſome of his ſubjects " againſt the aggreſſors; and no *precaution was* " *ſufficient to ſecure them from theſe ſubtle and de-* " *termined ruffians.* When ſeized and put to the " ſevereſt tortures, they triumphed amidſt their " agonies, and rejoiced that they had been deſ- " tined by heaven to ſuffer in ſo *juſt and merito-* " *rious a cauſe.* From them the term *aſſaſſin* has " paſſed into moſt European languages."*

We ought perhaps to hope that when the *United Iriſhmen* adopted ſo much of the ſpirit of this ſyſtem, they did not deliberately accede to all the enormities of its practice. The Old Man of the Mountain, himſelf, only had recourſe to theſe when milder expedients were unavailing, " He piqued himſelf," ſays Hume, " on never " beginning any offence, and had his regular for- " malities in requiring atonement." It was not until all ſuch overtures were rejected, that he iſ- ſued his laſt fatal orders. Poſſibly the *United Iriſh- men* alſo, at leaſt ſuch of them as were under the influence

* See Vertot's Knights of Malta, Vol. I. and Hume's Hiſtory of England, Vol. II. K. Richard I.

influence of "*profeſſional prudence*," might have wiſhed to effect their purpoſe by leſs deſperate methods. They might have flattered themſelves that by the dark and ſilent progreſs of their union, they would at length become completely irreſiſtible; and be able at the moment of "manifeſtation," to riſe with the equable force of a vaſt ſpring tide, rather than burſt out with the violence of a cataract. But be that as it may, the diſcipline of the inſtitution provided for other contingencies; the enthuſiaſm it inſpired was formed, and the event has ſhewn it to be fitted, for the moſt horrible extremities; nor could we ſuppoſe for a moment that men who in the coolneſs of theoretic reaſoning reckoned ſo much upon the influence of *confuſion* and *terror*, would ſuffer themſelves, in the warmth of practice, to be embarraſſed by an over-ſcrupulous humanity.

I have mentioned but one point of difference between the tribe of aſſaſſins and the *United Iriſhmen*; but there ſeems to be another, not leſs neceſſary to be ſtated. Amongſt the former no toleration was afforded to cunning without courage. It was indiſpenſable that each of their ſociety ſhould be bloody, bold and reſolute. Not ſo amongſt the *United Iriſhmen*; in their plan there is an expreſsly oppoſite proviſion. "Secrecy," ſay they, "is expedient," for this amongſt

other reaſons, becauſe " it will throw a veil over " thoſe individuals whoſe profeſſional prudence " might make them wiſh to lie concealed." It was not merely the principle of ſelf-preſervation which appears to have ſuggeſted this. With that miſchievous inſight into all the windings of human depravity which marks their whole plan, they ſeem to have concluded, that the ſharpeſt and moſt efficient ſubtlety was for the moſt part accompanied by the baſeſt puſillanimity; and dark intrigue being their ſheet-anchor, it was *expedient* and *neceſſary* to indulge cowardice, that they might attach uſeful villainy. But at all events what a temper of mind does the ſentiment manifeſt? Could the depths of Hell furniſh any thing more revolting to juſtice, honour or humanity, than that men thus deliberately engaging in a conſpiracy pregnant with every form of miſery to thouſands of their fellow mortals, ſhould at the ſame moment be calculating, how, in effecting this infernal project, they ſhould ſecure themſelves, not againſt the gibbet or the axe, not againſt baniſhment or impriſonment, or the leaſt of thoſe calamities which they were preparing for ſo many unconſcious victims, but (hear it gracious Heaven !) againſt any diminution of PROFESSIONAL EMOLUMENT !

ESSAY XVII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

" All *Combinations* and *Affociations*, under whatever plauſible character, with the *real deſign* to *direct*, *controul*, *counteract* or *awe* the regular deliberation and action of the conſtituted authorities, are deſtructive of the fundamental principles of Government; they ſerve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force, to put in the place of the delegated will of the Nation, the will of a party, often a *ſmall* but *artful* and *enterprizing minority* of the *Community*."

WASHINGTON'S Farewell Addreſs.

JUNE 1, 1797.

IT is not merely from the ſpirit which the *United Iriſhmen* breathed at their firſt formation, nor even from the means they adopted, ſtriking and concluſive as theſe evidences are, that I infer their *original Treaſon*. By an unaccountable dereliction of that very *ſecrecy* which was ſo earneſtly inculcated as a matter of indiſpenſable obſervance, this ſame paper has opened to us, not only the *deſign*, but the *extent* of the ſcheme, and has enabled us to judge as fully of the *ends* aimed at, as of the *means* to be employed.

We are told, in words which ought to have been felt at the time, as an *alarm-bell* to the ſlumbering

bering vigilance of the country, that the " gene-
" ral aim of the Society ſhould be, to make the
" light of philanthropy (a *pale* and *ineffectual*
" *light*) converge, and by converging, kindle
" into *ardent*, *energic*, *enthuſiaſtic* love for Ire-
" land; that genuine unadulterated enthuſiaſm
" which deſcends from a luminous head to a
" *burning heart*, and *impels* the ſpirit of man to
" exertions greatly good, or unequivocally great.
" For this Society is not to reſt *ſatisfied* in draw-
" ing SPECULATIVE *Plans of Reform* and *Im-*
" *provement*, but to be PRACTICALLY BUSIED
" in their *accompliſhment*. Were the hand of
" *Locke* to hold from Heaven a *ſcheme* of *Go-*
" *vernment*, moſt *perfectly adapted* to the *nature*
" and *capabilities* of the *Iriſh Nation*, it would
" drop to the ground a mere ſounding ſcroll,
" was there no other means of giving it effect,
" than *its own intrinſic excellence*.

" This Society," they go on, " is likely to be
" a means the moſt powerful for the promotion
" of a great end. What end? The *Rights of*
" *Man* in *Ireland*; the *greateſt happineſs* of the
" *greateſt number* in this Iſland; the *inherent* and
" *indefeaſible claims* of *every free Nation* to REST
" *in this Nation*; the WILL and the POWER to be
" happy, to *purſue* the *common weal* as an *indi-*
" *vidual* purſues his *private welfare*, and to
" STAND IN INSULATED INDEPENDANCE AN
IMPERATORIAL

" PERATORIAL PEOPLE. To gain a knowledge
" of the real ſtate of this heterogeneous country;
" to form a *ſummary* of the NATIONAL WILL and
" PLEASURE in points *moſt intereſting to national*
" *happineſs*; and when ſuch a ſummary is formed,
" to put *this* DOCTRINE as ſpeedily as may be
" into PRACTICE, will be the purpoſe of this
" *central Society* or Lodge, from which *other*
" *Lodges* in *different towns* will *radiate*.

" The GREATEST HAPPINESS of the GREAT-
" EST NUMBER. On the *rock of this principle*
" let this Society reſt; by *this* let it judge and
" determine *every political queſtion*, and *what-*
" *ever* is *neceſſary* for *this purpoſe*, let it not be
" accounted *hazardous*, but rather our *intereſt*,
" our *duty*, our *glory*, and our *common religion*.
" The rights of Men are the rights of God, and
" to vindicate the one is to maintain the other;
" we muſt be free to ſerve him whoſe ſervice is
" perfect freedom.

" This is *enthuſiaſm*; it is ſo, and who that
" has a ſpark of Hiberniciſm in his nature does
" not feel it kindle into a *flame of generous en-*
" *thuſiaſm?* Who that has a drop of ſympathy
" in his heart, when he looks around him, and
" ſees how HAPPINESS is *heaped up* in MOUNDS,
" and how MISERY is *diffuſed* and *divided amongſt*
" *the* MILLION, does not exclaim, *alas! for*
" *the*

" *the ſuffering!* and *oh! for the* POWER *to redreſs*
" *it!* And who is there, that has enthuſiaſm,
" ſufficient to make an exclamation, would not
" *combine* with others as honeſt as himſelf, to
" make the WILL live in the ACT, and to *ſwear*
" WE WILL REDRESS IT?"*

In this the voice of men ſeeking CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM? Is it not on the contrary as outrageous a denunciation as could be conveyed in language, not only againſt the Conſtitution of this Country, but againſt the order of ſociety in *every* Country? What is that deciſive expreſſion of *contempt* for all *ſpeculative plans of Reform*, that boaſtful reſolution of being *buſied in accompliſhment*, and that emphatic deſpair of ſucceeding in any meaſure, however uſeful or ſuitable, without *ſome other* means of giving it effect beſides its own *intrinſic excellence?* Do not theſe declarations alone amount to a determinate rejection of every

* 'What is the general object' ſays *Weiſhaupt?* '*The happineſs of* '*the human race.* It is not diſtreſſing to a generous mind, after con-templating what human nature is capable of, to ſee how little we 'enjoy? When we look at this goodly world, and ſee that every man '*may* be happy, but that the happineſs of one depends on the con-'duct of another; when we ſee the wicked ſo powerful and the good 'ſo weak; and that it is in vain to ſtrive ſingly and alone, againſt 'the general current of vice and oppreſſion; the wiſh naturally ariſes 'in the mind, that it were poſſible to form a durable combination 'of the moſt worthy perſons, who ſhould work together in removing 'the obſtacles to human happineſs, become terrible to the wicked, 'and give their aid to all the good without diſtinction. Would not 'ſuch an aſſociation be a bleſſing to the world?—*Robiſon's Proofs* 'Page 114.'

every conſtitutional idea, and as determinate an adoption of the worſt revolutionary expedients? What are thoſe *other* means? They are none of the reſources of reaſon, none of the natural weapons of truth; theſe are all voted down and diſcarded for ever in that imperious decree on the futility of *intrinſic excellence*; for *theſe* are nothing but *intrinſic excellence* demonſtrated, and urged with zeal and perſeverance. What then are thoſe means? They are *intrigue*, *cabal*, *conſpiracy*, TERROR, (for there is no alternative) and of courſe every thing, however dreadful, to which *terror* relates, and without which it would become an unreal mockery, more contemptible than even *intrinſic excellence* itſelf.

And to what end are theſe dark expedients to be applied? We are not left to collect this from ambiguous hints; we are told in what might be termed the very language of Revolutions, that it is to break the tie which binds Ireland to the Britiſh Empire, to eſtabliſh in this country Democracy in its boldeſt and broadeſt form, and to new-model property, ſo as to effect the wideſt poſſible diſtribution of it amongſt the populace. What but the *firſt* of theſe can we underſtand, "by the *inherent* and *indefeaſible claims* of *every* "*free Nation*, being made to *reſt* in *this Nation*; "and by the *power* to purſue the common good "*as an individual purſues* his *private welfare?*"

" remedy leſs than *ſome great convulſion, which*
" may bring back the Conſtitution to its original
" principles, or *utterly deſtroy* it. Is this opi-
" nion ſtill truer with reſpect to *this* country?
" or is it falſe?

" Who are the *People?*

" Can the *right* of CHANGING the CONSTI-
" TUTION reſt any where but in the *original con-*
" *ſtitutive power*, the PEOPLE.

Can the WILL of the PEOPLE be known, but
" by *full* and *fair convention*, to be conſtituted
" *on the plan* which ſhall come recommended on
" the moſt POPULAR AUTHORITY?

" Is there any middle ſtate between the ex-
" tremes of *Union* with Britain and TOTAL SE-
" PARATION, in which the *Rights of the People*
" can be *fully eſtabliſhed* and *reſt in ſecurity?*

" What is the *form of Government* that will
" ſecure to us our rights with the *leaſt expence*
" and the *greateſt benefit?*"

" By the BROTHERHOOD, are *theſe* queſtions
" and *ſuch* as theſe to be *determined*; on this *de-*
" *termination* are *they to form* the *chart* of *their*
" *conſtitution*, which with honour and good faith
" they

" they are to ſubſcribe, and which is to regulate " their courſe."

It will be ſeen at once that almoſt every one of theſe pretended queries is ſo put, as to inſtruct the political catechumen in the anſwer he is to return; that each ſubſequent queſtion proceeds upon the ſuppoſition that the foregoing one has been anſwered agreeably to the wiſh of the propoſer; and that of courſe, though queſtions in appearance, they are in reality Propoſitions, only couched in a more inſinuating form. In the firſt two queſtions the word *Reform* is introduced; in the next it is *Renovation*, CONVULSION, DESTRUCTION. Then comes the right of the multitude to *change the Conſtitution* by means of a *Convention* formed on the baſis of *mere population*. Next follows *Separation from Great Britain* as eſſential to the full eſtabliſhment of the National Rights; and laſt of all, the formation of *ſuch* a Government as theſe ſecret, ſelf-elected Repreſentatives of the People ſhall be pleaſed to appoint. For let it be obſerved that after having aſſerted that the *Will of the People* can only be known by *full and fair Convention*, they tell us plainly, (as they had in effect told us before,) that they mean to take the leading functions of Legiſlation in the firſt inſtance upon *themſelves*; that it is by them all the *great* queſtions are to be decided; and that conſequently even a *Convention*

vention is to be nothing but an apparatus for giving a popular colouring to their deſpotic determinations.

The reader is now in poſſeſſion of what may be fairly conſidered as the United Iriſhmen's *own* development of their original deſign. And let it be obſerved, that it is a development made, not in the ferment of irritated zeal, but at the moment when it might be ſuppoſed their paſſions would be calmeſt and their reaſon leaſt miſled. Other ſimilar deſigns have at firſt been but rudely conceived, and have owed their after-maturity to experience, and not ſeldom to accident; but this *Minerva* of the United Iriſhmen ſeems to have come forth at once from the head that gendered it, complete in every limb and lineament. The melancholy events which have taken place of late, imply no advance in the *Theory*; they are no more than that theory reduced in a very trifling degree to *practice*. By comparing *both*, every man may judge for himſelf whether all the enormities which we lament, and all that we can dread, were not as much contained in the *firſt idea* of this aſſociation, as a brood of living vipers, that now hiſs and ſting, were once contained in the bowels of the reptile which produced them.

ESSAY XVIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONCLUDED.

"Towards the preſervation of your Government, it is requiſite not only that you ſteadily diſcountenance irregular oppoſitions to its acknowledged authority, but alſo that you reſiſt with care the ſpirit of innovation upon its principles, however ſpecious the pretexts: One method of aſſault may be, to effect in the *form* of the conſtitution *alterations* which will *impair* the *energy* of the ſyſtem, and thus to *undermine what cannot be directly overthrown.* In all the changes to which you are invited, remember, that facility in changes upon the credit of *mere hypotheſis* and *opinion*, expoſes to perpetual change, from the *endleſs variety* of hypotheſis and opinion; and remember eſpecially, that for the *efficient* management of your common intereſts, a Government of as much vigour as is conſiſtent with the perfect ſecurity of liberty, is indiſpenſable."

WASHINGTON's Farewell Addreſs.

JUNE. 6, 1797.

IN the two laſt papers I have laid before my readers the ſtatement given by the founders of the Society of United Iriſhmen, of their intentions and views; it only remains to ſhew, that when their Society was actually formed, no variation took place in their principles, nor any abatement in the violence of their purpoſe.

It is eaſy to prove this by the ſame inconteſtable evidence of their own declarations. One of their

their earlieſt publications, after they had announced themſelves as the *Society* of *United Iriſhmen*, was a Circular Letter addreſſed to two ſimilar Societies in the town of Belfaſt, and ſigned by the well-known *Tandy* as their Secretary. In this (wherein, it is impoſſible not to perceive the moſt ſtriking marks of that ſame pen which has been already alluded to) the whole ſpirit of their firſt Addreſs is condenſed into two or three emphatic ſentences: "The "object of this inſtitution," ſay they, "is, to "make a UNITED SOCIETY of the IRISH NA- "TION—to make ALL *Iriſhmen Citizens*—ALL "*Citizens Iriſhmen*. It becomes neceſſary by a "*union* of *minds* and a *knowledge* of *each other*, "to WILL and ACT *as a Nation*. To *know* "*each other* is to *know ourſelves*, the *weakneſs* of "*one*, the *ſtrength* of MANY. *Union*, therefore, "is POWER, it is *wiſdom*, it muſt be *liberty*. "Our *deſign* therefore in *forming this Society*, is "to *give an example* which, when *well followed*, "muſt COLLECT the PUBLIC WILL and CONCEN- "TRATE the PUBLIC FORCE—the *effect of which* "*muſt* be RAPID, MOMENTOUS and CONSE- "QUENTIAL."

Can any thing under Heaven be more aſtoniſhing than that after theſe expreſſions being in circulation from the month of January 1792, there ſhould at this day be any neceſſity for uſing arguments

arguments to prove the *original Treaſon* of the *United Iriſhmen?* There is not an idea here, nor a ſingle word, which is not pregnant with revolutionary horrors. What is that UNION of *minds*, that *knowledge of each other*, in order to WILLING and ACTING as a *Nation?* Can they mean any thing but DARK CONSPIRACY, *ſo extended* through the *populace*; ſo *ſecretly*, and yet ſo *powerfully* linked and jointed, as that at length the *whole maſs* of the *lower claſſes* may be both *ready* and ABLE to *riſe as* ONE MAN? Is not this the literal purport of *that example* which they deſign to give? "When *well followed*," they tell us, "it "will *collect* the PUBLIC WILL, and *concentrate* "the PUBLIC FORCE." That is, it will inſpire the ignorant, inflammable multitude with ſuch a *frantic rage* for *Democracy*, that they will be ready to perpetrate whatever ſhall be propoſed to them, and by that means ſecure to their Leaders a ſort of POLITICAL OMNIPOTENCE.

They add that the effect of this muſt be RAPID, MOMENTOUS, and CONSEQUENTIAL; evidently implying, that if it were to be otherwiſe, it would not anſwer their purpoſe. Might they not juſt as well have ſaid, that it would be *ſanguinary*, *remorſeleſs*, and *incalculably deſtructive?* Did they not know that in ſuch a caſe, the latter epithets would be ſtrictly explanatory of the former, and that when once their plan

ſhould commence, there would be no ſecurity againſt any miſery which cruelty could inflict, or weakneſs ſuffer? Yes; they knew it well, as well from the dictates of common ſenſe as from the experience of every age and nation. And yet, with *all this* in their view, with *havoc*, *aſſaſſination*, *maſſacre*, every horror at which nature ſhudders, every demon which hell ſends forth to deſolate life and harrow up the ſoul, ſtanding right before them in their path, only waiting the moment of "ma-"niſeſtation," to ruſh upon their deſtined prey, theſe men went on deliberately with their deſign, have purſued it without remiſſion for nearly ſix years, and are at this day more deſperately bent upon it than ever, though France itſelf, after the fulleſt trial of its effects, has already, ſolemnly and in the hearing of all Europe, renounced it, as the deadlieſt curſe that could befal a country.

And yet theſe are the men who have been cheared and toaſted by the *Whig Club* in England, and pitied and patronized by the *Whig Club* in Ireland! Theſe are they who have been repreſented by the great Oppoſition Orator in the Britiſh Parliament, as looking for nothing but the full enjoyment of the Britiſh Conſtitution, and as ready to return to tranquillity, if this reaſonable boon were but granted; and theſe are they for whom the *Paragon* of Iriſh eloquence

eloquence has offered up his fervent prayers to Heaven, that the ſame Providence which conducted another perſecuted tribe through the wilderneſs, may lead theſe victims of oppreſſion alſo through the horrors with which they are ſurrounded!

Are we to ſuppoſe that theſe good-natured politicians were caught, in the ſimplicity of their hearts, by that verbal bait of Reform with which the United Iriſhmen have covered their barbed hook of revolutionary Democracy? Did they really not know that *their* Reform was itſelf but *Democracy* under another name? That its eſſential features were *Univerſal* Suffrage, *annual* Elections, and *every Man* to be capable of being elected? And were they not well aware that ſuch a mob-elected and mob-dependent Houſe of Commons as this plan would create, would itſelf be the moſt infallible engine that wicked policy could deviſe, for beating down the two other branches of the Legiſlature? Were they ignorant of theſe ſelf-evident facts, or did they wilfully ſacrifice both their conſcience and the ſafety of their country, to the deſperate poſſibility of a triumph over their political rivals? On this queſtion depends, whether we are to deſpiſe them for their infatuation, or to execrate them for their profligacy.

With the Engliſh Allies of the United Iriſhmen, I have at preſent no concern. But that the Chiefs of the Oppoſition in this kingdom have been ſinning againſt conviction, that they were perſuaded in their hearts of the direct reverſe of what they have been ſo ſolemnly aſſerting, we need no other proof than their own former declarations. Never were the real views of the United Iriſhmen more clearly or more ably developed, than by that very man who has of late taken the lead as their advocate and their encomiaſt. "The friends of Univerſal Suf-"frage," ſays he, in his ſpeech on Mr. W. B. Ponſonby's Bill in the Seſſion of 1794, "re-"pudiate the Conſtitution of England, which "the wiſdom of ages has framed, and introduce "another ſyſtem founded according to them on "natural right. In my opinion it is founded on "a violation of the moſt obvious of thoſe rights. "There is no natural right more undeniable than "that every man has a right to the fruits of his "own induſtry. Is it not a violation of that "right, that the man who has neither induſtry "nor property ſhould tax him?

"If," he adds, "ſuch a principle were ad-"mitted, what deſcription of people would ſuffer "by it? The reſpectable Farmer and the weal-"thy Citizen. The Candidate, inſtead of ap-"plying to *them*, would apply to the *labourer* "in the *ſtable*, he would apply to the *beggar* on "the

" the *bridge*, the *criminal* in the *jail*, and the *poor* " in the *hoſpital*. The *mob* of Electors thus " *raked* together would ſhoulder the *ſober Citi-* " *zen* from the huſtings, and the ſhout of whiſ- " key would return the Members of the Senate, " and elect a *felonious Repreſentation*. Annual " Elections too! What miſchiefs would they " not induce? They would introduce a ſtate of " permanent intoxication, by which all the uſe- " ful arts and labours of life would be ſuper- " ſeded. They would, in a word, lead direct- " ly to the annihilation of Royalty and the eſta- " bliſhment of a French Republic.—If ſuch " were to be the Reform, I would infinitely ra- " ther ſubmit to the preſent abuſes;—and if I " could think that this bill went in the *moſt remote* " degree to introduce ſuch a ſyſtem, I would " inſtantly abandon it."

Such was Mr. Grattan's language three years ago, when the dangers he alludes to were comparatively contemptible, when the party which he points at, had neither ſtrength nor number; and now, when the very ſame party, by an indefatigable diſſemination of thoſe very doctrines, have increaſed the hazards, which he then viewed with horror a thouſand fold; now, when that Society, to whoſe infant efforts he deemed it his duty to oppoſe his moſt earneſt zeal and his moſt nervous eloquence, boaſt of having a revolutionary army of an hundred thouſand men all ready to die rather

ther than deſert their object, he is ſilent; he ſhrinks from enquiry; nay more, he ſupports and approves, and affects to coaleſce with the very men whom then he reprobated!

And yet this man has talked of conſiſtency! When, after the Report of the *Secret Committees* he could no longer plead reaſon, or juſtice, or expediency, for his ſtill diſſenting from every meaſure of ſeverity againſt thoſe who had decreed, a general confiſcation and the maſſacre of thirty thouſand, he tried to prop himſelf on the ground of conſiſtency. But does he feel it no violation of conſiſtency, to *flatter* and *defend* thoſe traitors to whoſe ſuppreſſion he was once ready (had it been proved neceſſary) to ſacrifice even the attempt at moderate reform? What is ſuch conſiſtency? Is it not an improvement on Swift's notion of conſcience, and ſtill more, the counterpart of that piece of human drapery, which, as that author ſays, ſerves to cover both naſtineſs and vice, but is eaſily ſlipped down, for the accommodation of either?

But this is not all; the meaſures now recommended by this gentleman and his colleagues are themſelves a refutation of their moſt ſolemn aſſertions. Their chief meaſure has been a *Reform Bill.* Why has this bill been preſented *now* in ſo very different a ſhape from what it bore, when the

the ſame perſons introduced it three years ago? Their cauſe would have gained ſtrength with all thinking men, from its being ſeen, that after three years reflection they had found no room for material alteration. Whereas on the contrary, the radical change of features which it now exhibits, muſt ſuggeſt to every reflecting perſon, this powerful objection, that if Oppoſition had carried their point three years ago, we ſhould have been no nearer tranquillity *now*; ſince even in their own judgment a ſtill farther Reform would at this day have been neceſſary; and, by parity of reaſon, if the preſent plan were to be adopted, we ſhould be equally expoſed to the demand for ſtill further alteration, and (from the principle, of change at the call of the multitude, being admitted,) ſtill more liable to the neceſſity of indefinite conceſſion.

It is ſelf-evident that theſe gentlemen would not have ſhifted from ſo much ſtronger to ſo much weaker ground, without ſome irreſiſtible motive. What then could that motive have been? Clearly no other than this, they knew that if they attempted to bring up their old Bill unaltered, the men they ſought to conciliate, would have daſhed it back in their teeth. It was obviouſly for this reaſon that the old plan of enlarging boroughs by annexing to them a ſurrounding diſtrict (which Mr. Grattan then maintained

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the ſame perſons introduced it three years ago? Their cauſe would have gained ſtrength with all thinking men, from its being ſeen, that after three years reflection they had found no room for material alteration. Whereas on the contrary, the radical change of features which it now exhibits, muſt ſuggeſt to every reflecting perſon, this powerful objection, that if Oppoſition had carried their point three years ago, we ſhould have been no nearer tranquillity *now*; ſince even in their own judgment a ſtill farther Reform would at this day have been neceſſary; and, by parity of reaſon, if the preſent plan were to be adopted, we ſhould be equally expoſed to the demand for ſtill further alteration, and (from the principle, of change at the call of the multitude, being admitted,) ſtill more liable to the neceſſity of indefinite conceſſion.

It is ſelf-evident that theſe gentlemen would not have ſhifted from ſo much ſtronger to ſo much weaker ground, without ſome irreſiſtible motive. What then could that motive have been? Clearly no other than this, they knew that if they attempted to bring up their old Bill unaltered, the men they ſought to conciliate, would have daſhed it back in their teeth. It was obviouſly for this reaſon that the old plan of enlarging boroughs by annexing to them a ſurrounding diſtrict (which Mr. Grattan then maintained

tained to be the wiſeſt and the juſteſt medium between an overbearing ariſtocratic power on the one hand, and a dangerous democratic influence on the other,) has been given up, and this new ſcheme of a departmental topography, exhibiting as much of the ſemblance of a popular ſuffrage as could exiſt without the reality, ſubſtituted in its room. But what is the language of this conduct? Is it not the moſt direct contradiction, of all that they themſelves had ſtated in their cenſures of the ſtrong meaſures purſued by Government, and the moſt irrefragable proof of their own conviction, that the men whom they wiſhed to gratify are obſtinate Democrats, to whom no plan of reform would be acceptable, but in proportion as it departed even from the forms of the exiſting Conſtitution?

Men, whoſe ſole object is place and power for themſelves, let it coſt what it may to their abuſed and injured country, may eaſily enough reconcile their hackneyed and callous conſciences to ſuch political debauchery. But if we ſuffer our lives and properties to be the ſtake of their infernal game, we deſerve the doom which awaits us. We have but one rational object, the ſpeedy and permanent tranquillizing of the country. The ſingle intereſting queſtion to us, is, how may this be moſt certainly effected? If the United Iriſhmen could be conſidered as deſirous merely to correct

correct abuſes, but ſtill cordially attached to the ſubſtance of the Conſtitution, it might perhaps be raſh to affirm that no conciliatory meaſure ought to be conceded: But if on the contrary, they are, notoriouſly and avowedly, implacable enemies both to the form and ſpirit of the Conſtitution, aſſociated for the ſole purpoſe of overthrowing it, and determined never to relinquiſh the conteſt, until that object be accompliſhed, then, what could be more frantic than to think of appeaſing them by half-meaſures? and what more traitorous than to urge ſuch half-meaſures as muſt incalculably increaſe the ſtrength of our opponents, and at the ſame time deprive us of every means of reſiſtance?

How far the Conſtitution which we have hitherto valued as our beſt inheritance, ought to be preſerved, is a queſtion for every man to determine in his own boſom. But if it be indeed an object, by what means under Heaven can it be ſecured, except by the moſt unqualified reſiſtance to the wretches who have combined to deſtroy it, and the moſt unequivocal reprobation of their half-hearted, hypocritical, and if poſſible, ſtill more hateful auxiliaries?

ESSAY XIX.

A REPLY

TO THAT PART OF THE

SPEECH

SAID TO BE DELIVERED BY

Mr. FOX on Mr. GREY's MOTION for REFORM,

WHICH RESPECTS THE AFFAIRS OF IRELAND.

Satis Eloquentiæ, Sapientiæ Parum. SALLUST.

HARROGATE, JUNE 28, 1797.

BEING in a remote part of North Britain when the Speech aſcribed to Mr. Fox, on Mr. GREY's late Motion for Reform, appeared in the Public Papers, I did not happen to meet it until a few days ago, when it was put into my hands in the form of a Pamphlet. Accuſtomed as I was to that Right Hon. Gentleman's ſtatements reſpecting the affairs of Ireland, the repreſentation given of them here, and the argument deduced from them in proof of the neceſſity of an immediate Parliamentary Reform in Great Britain, excited my aſtoniſhment. Never, I think,

tion

was a more unfounded and miſchievous fabrication than the one, or a more deſperate fallacy than the other, impoſed upon the public.

I ſhould be ſorry to attribute the groſſneſs of the contrivance to the Gentleman in whoſe name it is given to the world. Inflamed as he may be with the rage of party politics, I hope and truſt, that that milk of human kindneſs for which he has ever got credit, is not yet ſo curdled and ſoured, and turned to venom within him, as that he could endeavour deliberately and of ſet purpoſe to help forward havock and maſſacre in one Country by his countenance, and excite them in another by his Councils. He muſt unqueſtionably have been deceived himſelf, before he could thus become the deceiver and betrayer of others. He could only know the ſituation of Ireland by the report of his friends in that Kingdom. It is therefore, not of his own falſehoods, but of theirs, falſehoods which, with all their callous effrontery, they dared not have ſent abroad in their own Country, that this Gentleman is made, perhaps the unconſcious, but ſtill the dangerouſly ſeductive circulator through another community, a community, incompetent too generally for want of accurate information, to detect the impoſture.

As an Inhabitant of that Siſter Kingdom, and a not careleſs obſerver of the events which have

occurred in it, and as a ſincere friend to the welfare of the Empire at large, I think it my duty, to contribute my mite toward guarding the public mind againſt the effects of this malignant libel. In doing this, I ſhall not pretend to ſpeak with philoſophic coolneſs; my feelings would not permit me. Till within theſe very few weeks, I have been almoſt in the midſt of thoſe horrors which the fabricators of theſe falſehoods have laboured to deepen. I have loſt one invaluable friend* (and in him the Country an ornament and an honour) by that infernal plan of cowardly cold-blooded aſſaſſination which thoſe wretched Politicians have helped to foſter by their indulgence. I have trembled, daily and hourly, for the ſafety of many other dear friends, whoſe honeſt and active zeal put them in perpetual jeopardy. I cannot therefore but be warm. But I will not be unjuſt, I will ſpeak of things as they are, nothing extenuate; nor, I appeal to Heaven, ſet down aught in malice.

The Right Hon. Gentleman is made to ſtate from the Report of the Secret Committees of the Iriſh Parliament, that the Seditious Societies in that Kingdom were ſmall in their beginnings, but have now increaſed to the number of an hundred thouſand men. The following queſtion is then

* The Rev. Dr. William Hamilton (author of the *Letters on the Giant's Cauſeway*) aſſaſſinated in the month of April, 1797.

then put, " By what means have they ſo increaſ-
" ed; and who have been the converts and proſe-
" lytes who have ſwelled their numbers to ſo gi-
" gantic a ſize?"—To this it is anſwered, " Ob-
" viouſly the men who had no ſuch deſire, no
" ſuch feelings, no ſuch deſign originally: obvi-
" ouſly the perſons who had no other object in
" view in all the Petitions which they pretend,
" and in all the applications which they made,
" than Catholic Emancipation and Reform of
" Parliament. This is admitted by the Report."
I muſt here interrupt the Orator for one moment, to obſerve, that in this inſtance he muſt have deceived himſelf. The Report certainly admits no ſuch thing. It allows, for ſuch was the fact, that they *profeſſed* no other object; but the hollow hypocriſy of this profeſſion was ſo ſelf-evident as to impoſe upon none, except ſuch as wiſhed to be in error.

" The ſpirit of Reform," the Speech proceeds, " ſpread over the country: they made
" humble, earneſt, and repeated applications to
" the *Caſtle* for redreſs, but *there* they found a
" fixed determination to reſiſt every claim. They
" made their application to all the eminent and
" conſiderable characters in the Country, who had
" on former occaſions diſtinguiſhed themſelves in
" the popular cauſe. But unfortunately they were
" ſo alarmed by the French Revolution, and by
" the

" the cry ſet up by Miniſters, of the danger of in-
" fection, that they could not liſten to the com-
" plaint. What was the conſequence? Theſe
" bodies of men, who found it in vain to expect
" redreſs from the Government at the Caſtle, or
" from the Parliament, and having no where elſe
" to recur to, joined the Societies whom the Re-
" port accuſes of cheriſhing the deſire of ſepara-
" tion from England: and they imbibed and be-
" came converts to thoſe notions of frantic am-
" bition which the Report lays to their charge,
" and which threaten conſequences ſo dreadful
" and alarming, that no man can contemplate
" them without horror and diſmay."

Had the diſcretion of this Gentleman been but half as great as his volubility, he would have enquired into the grounds of this ſtatement before he made himſelf reſponſible for its truth; and ſtill more, before he drew from it thoſe arguments of alarm, by which he would urge his Countrymen to ruſh headlong down the ſteep of dark and deſperate experiment. But let not the People of Great Britain ſuffer themſelves to be frighted forward by a phantom, where they ought not to proceed a hair breadth but by the light of reaſon, and the guidance of experience. I tell them, and every honeſt Iriſhman who is acquainted with the ſtate of his own Country, will tell them, that there is not an aſſertion in this

this plauſible tale, which is not a flagrant violation of the moſt notorious truth.

But it involves much more than this. It is as groſs a libel upon honeſt and reſpectable men as ever was circulated. The perſons who firſt ſtood forward in Ireland as advocates and petitioners for Reform, might have been erroneous in their ends, and were perhaps ſtill more erroneous in their expedients. Their Aſſociations and Conventions, civil as well as military, virtually illegal beyond a doubt, but not then forbidden by any expreſs Statute, too ſurely led the way, and furniſhed a precedent for the more dangerous combinations that have followed. But ſtill they were at *heart* attached to the Conſtitution, and would not intentionally have purſued its ſuppoſed improvement by hazarding its downfal. They were not men made for coaleſcing with Conſpiracy, or participating in Treaſon; and ſo far are they from having been proſelyted by the wretches who call themſelves *United Iriſhmen*, that I doubt much whether the name of one in a thouſand of thoſe original Reformiſts, was ever entered on the muſter-rolls of the ſeditious. They have been much more diſpoſed to drop their purſuit for the preſent, even of moderate Reform, perſuaded that a hurricane ſeaſon is not the time for unroofing an houſe. And many of them have gone ſtill farther, and from conviction

tion have given a firm and unqualified ſupport to the meaſures purſued by Government for cruſhing inſurrection.

The abſurdity riſes yet higher, when it is ſtated in ſuch piteous terms, that they who now form the great body of the United Iriſhmen, made *humble, earneſt*, and *repeated applications to Government and to Parliament for redreſs*. The notorious fact is, that at leaſt ninety-nine out of an hundred of theſe perſons (I am ſure I ſpeak much within bounds,) never were concerned, directly or indirectly, in any Petition for Parliamentary Reform in the courſe of their lives; nor did they ever riſe from the ſluggiſh maſs until they were maddened into murderous activity by the circulation of *Paine's* Rights of Man, and the peſtilent ſuggeſtions of their own revolutionary Leaders. Theſe laſt knew their buſineſs too well, to hope for much from thoſe who had actually been Petitioners for Reform. After a few fruitleſs overtures, they ſhunned rather than ſought them. "With countenance grim" they "glar-" ed on them paſſing," and ſkulked off to prowl for fitter prey among the dark places of ſociety. It was to indigence and idleneſs, to wild deſire and vulgar curioſity, to the giddy fervour of unthinking boys, and to the pride and avarice of ſucceſsful Huckſters and Foreſtallers, that they made

made their application. It was to the views and feelings of theſe that they fitted with infernal adroitneſs every circumſtance of their ſyſtem: and to the attraction that attended their ſeductive lures, in every one of theſe inſtances, but not to diſappointment, or deſpair of any reaſonable object in any inſtance, do they owe the gigantic growth of their execrable ſociety.

But the cream of the jeſt is ſerved up when we are told, that they who on former occaſions had diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the popular cauſe, were then ſo alarmed by the French Revolution, that they could not liſten to the popular complaint. I ſhould be glad to know when this happened. I defy the Right Hon. Gentleman, with all the aid he can obtain from his Iriſh Inſtructors, to point out the period to which ſuch an aſſertion is applicable. The United Iriſhmen did not exiſt as a ſociety until December 1791. I am not poſitively certain that the queſtion of Parliamentary Reform was taken up that very Seſſion; but it is notorious that it was agitated largely and deeply in the next Seſſion; and even brought forward once more in the next after that. And on that occaſion (I think in March 1794) I well remember to have heard the gentleman who ſeconded the motion for the Bill being received and read, declare, that he and his friends had ſo little encouragement from the Public, that they

only brought the buſineſs on from a regard to their own conſiſtency, " For (ſaid he) how can " we hope to ſucceed when we are not ſupported " by a *ſingle Petition?*"

The truth was, that not the uſual ſupporters of Reform within, but rather the original promoters of it without doors, were ſo diſcouraged by the unuſual circumſtances of the times, and ſo embarraſſed by the frantic propoſitions of the United Iriſhmen, who were juſt then beginning to ſpeak out, that they were not diſpoſed to take any ſtep whatever; and as to the United Iriſhmen themſelves, the Bill having any thing of a conſtitutional complexion, was ſufficient to make them deſpiſe it in their hearts. Their opinion on this ſubject was very plainly declared ſome time after, by their mouth-piece, *Dr. Drennan*, " That bill (ſaid he) was dictated by a penurious and ſtarveling policy: it ſeemed to proceed from a diſcouraged oppoſition wiſhing to obtain ſomething rather than to ſuit a generous Adminiſtration willing to give all. By attaching the *oldeſt inheritance* of the *whole people* to certain round ſpots of earth, it gave a locality to Liberty inconſiſtent with nature, paling in, as with pieces of packthread, the liberality of the Conſtitution, and circumſcribing, with brief authority, the principles of eternal juſtice."*

What,

* Letter to Earl Fitzwilliam.—1795.

What, therefore, the Gentleman could mean by ſaying of his friends, that at one particular time they *could not attend* to the complaint of thoſe who *petitioned* for *Parliamentary Reform*, I am utterly at a loſs to conjecture, unleſs perhaps he alluded to that *brief period* of their own *abortive Adminiſtration*, and intended ſome ſort of a lame apology for their groſs inconſiſtency. *Then*, it muſt indeed be allowed, they dropped the buſineſs of Parliamentary Reform quite and clean. But ſhall we believe that they did ſo from any extraordinary alarm which the French Revolution juſt then gave them, when we know, that though the danger was preciſely the ſame, they evidently felt no ſuch alarm either before or afterward? Is it poſſible for dulneſs itſelf not to diſcover at once, that it aroſe ſolely from a little *official nervouſneſs* which they contracted from the air of the Caſtle, but which they inſtantly threw off when they returned to a purer atmoſphere?

But ſuppoſing that to be proved (which never can be proved), that the reſentment of the Partizans of Reform, at being diſappointed in their favourite object, had tended to ſwell the numbers of the United Iriſhmen, ſtill the concluſion of this Gentleman reſpecting the crime of the Iriſh Government in refuſing it, would not follow; becauſe it might ſtill be ſhewn, that on every ground of reaſon and ſound policy, the

thing in queſtion was impracticable. On the Gentleman's own principles, *one* great end of ſuch a conceſſion ought to be, *popular ſatisfaction*, to gratify the claimants, and attach them more firmly to the Conſtitution. But how could this end be ſecured until it was known *what* would gratify the claimants? And again, how could the claimants make this known until they had firſt made up their own minds on what they themſelves would be at? When the people underſtand their own wiſhes, and when the obvious reaſonableneſs of thoſe wiſhes has wrought a general and fixed agreement of ſentiment, it may be politic as well as juſt to concede, becauſe it may then be hoped that the conceſſion will produce ſatisfaction. But when the agreement of the People conſiſts in nothing more than their common uſe of a cant term, which admits of, and actually bears, an hundred different meanings; when at the utmoſt they have merely ſettled, that they are to quit the ground they have hitherto occupied, but no two of them are united in their choice of a new ſtation; when even the ſame men are never long of the ſame opinion, but think this the beſt of all poſſible plans to-day, and that the beſt of all poſſible plans to-morrow; amid this unappeaſable anarchy of mind, this "diſcord with a thouſand various mouths," what, in the name of Heaven, is to be done? Are they who are charged with that moſt awful and moſt delicate of all truſts, the ſafety of a Community,

to

to ruſh forward, and act at random on the wild ſuppoſition that *any thing* that can be *called* REFORM, will charm down the tumult? Or are they manfully, but coolly, to withſtand the madneſs, the *Civium ardor prava jubentium*, and refuſe to make any change until there be ſomething like unity of ſentiment concerning it, and until the *clear* and ſteady ſtream of *common ſenſe* can be diſtinguiſhed from the caſual torrents of prejudice and paſſion? If *this* be the wiſer courſe, then may the refuſers of Reform in Ireland ſet thoſe who accuſe them at defiance. Nay, they may ſafely engage to acknowledge, not only that they have made the People traitors through deſpair, but that they are deſperate traitors themſelves, as ſoon as it ſhall be proved that they have rejected a ſingle *ſpecified* Demand for Parliamentary Reform, which any honeſt looker-on could have pronounced to be ſupported by a general and fixed agreement, I will not ſay of the *majority*, but of the *thouſandth part* of the Community.

"But," ſays the Gentleman, "will any one "argue, that if Reform had been conceded to the "eighty or an hundred thouſand moderate Petitioners, you would have this day to lament the "union of an hundred thouſand men, bent on ob-"jects ſo extenſive, ſo alarming, ſo calamitous?" The chimera of the hundred thouſand moderate petitioners has already been diſpoſed of; to the

ſpirit

ſpirit of the queſtion I heſitate not to anſwer, that the Gentleman's *Noſtrum* would be no ſort of ſecurity againſt the diſeaſe. On this point, the caſe of the United States of America has more force than all the declamation in the world. *There*, all the infallible preventives of the Right Hon. Gentleman exiſted in their fulleſt extent. The People had themſelves made the Government, that Government reſted on the broadeſt baſis, and the individual was identified with the State as much as was poſſible in the nature of things. Yet, *there* Jacobiniſm eſtabliſhed itſelf in its rankeſt form, ſpread its deadly infection widely and rapidly through the community, and threatened (and perhaps ſtill threatens) every calamity that Ireland has apprehended, without a poſſibility of recurring to equally effectual means of prevention. *There* it was found neceſſary (in a manner that Ireland has not yet been reduced to, and through God's good providence never may) to brave the "aſſertors" of the ſelf-ſame principles "in the open field;" and a levy of fifteen thouſand men (made indeed with difficulty from perſons of the ſame ſpirit with the Gentleman's friends in Ireland, having inſtilled into their minds that they were called out to cut the throats of their fellow citizens merely in order to ſupport the rich creditors of the State), and an expence of a million and a half of dollars were deemed but ſufficient to repreſs the inſurrection.

But

But what followed? The venerable WASHINGTON returned from conducting this armament, not to enjoy his own higheſt happineſs in the reſtored order of his country, but to face the ſame pernicious influence where he was far leſs able to combat it. He returned to be braved and inſulted by the French Miniſter in his audience-chamber, and to be mortified and humiliated by the infatuation of his countrymen, in the Aſſembly of the States. From the *Congreſs* being *preciſely* what this Gentleman would make our *Parliament*, "the *faithful organ* of the people's *will*;" it reflected and concentrated, inſtead of repreſſing and cooling, their *madneſs*. Nearly one half of the Lower Houſe were found to be ſmitten with the frenzy; and the queſtion which was to determine whether North America was to keep its place amongſt the Nations, or to become the *minion* and the *ſlave* of imperious *France*, was decided on the ſide of reaſon, honour, and intereſt, by a *ſingle vote*. It was no wonder that the hoary Preſident revolted from the hazard of ſuch another trial; that he reſigned a Government for which he could no longer be reſponſible, and withdrew to his native ſhades to paſs the evening of his illuſtrious life, thus diſmally beclouded in weeping over the diſgraces of his beloved, but infatuated country.

At the touch of this ſingle fact, all the unſubſtantial pageants of our political *Proſpero* waſte into

into thin air. In America, there had been no *unwiſe, unjuſt, impolitic refuſal of Reform*, to turn *moderate Petitioners* into *deſperate Inſurgents*. They already poſſeſſed much more than perhaps even this Gentleman might be willing to concede, and no deviation from original principles could be proved againſt the Truſtees of power. Yet the ſymptoms of diſaffection were fiercer and more virulent than they have yet been in Ireland, notwithſtanding all the ſuppoſed provocations. "The blaze," ſays one of the moſt ſagacious American Writers, "did not indeed communi-"cate itſelf with ſuch rapidity as it had done in "*France*, nor did it rage with ſo much fury when "it had caught; however, ſuch was the indefa-"tigableneſs of the Democratic Club, that *more* "*enmity* was excited to the *general Government* "in the ſpace of *ſix months*, than was excited "againſt the *Colonial Government* at the *time of* "*the Declaration of Independence*." But why was the blaze of Jacobiniſm leſs rapid and leſs furious than in *France?* "Not," ſays our Author, "be-"cauſe there was any want of art or malice on "the part of the Incendiaries;" but becauſe the matter they had to work upon was leſs advanta-geouſly placed. It did not, as in moſt European Nations, lie in cloſe contact; nor was it equally fitted to communicate the flame. The popula-tion was thinly ſcattered over a vaſt ſpace, and there was little *idleneſs* or *mendicancy*. If com-munication

munication had been as eaſy, indigence as general, and herds of vagabonds and ruffians as readily collected in America as in Ireland, can we heſitate to pronounce what would have been the event? If the Government (the object of all this rancour, notwithſtanding its *perfection*,) was but barely able to keep its ground, as matters actually ſtood, what muſt have been its fate, if the ſpeculative traitors in the Clubs and in the Congreſs could have found, in thoſe dregs of Society which they had not, but which every populous *country muſt have*, hordes of ferocious men, a thirſt for their doctrines, and prompt to execute their purpoſes? In that caſe, they would not have confined their vengeance to the *beheading* of a *roaſted Pig**, as the emblematic repreſentative of *him* who had helped them to Independence, the unfortunate Louis, but would have wreaked it on the living objects of their more intimate malevolence, the virtuous Washington, the wiſe Adams, and the other active oppoſers of Revolutionary profligacy.

* The fact here referred to, is thus ſtated by the acute and well-informed Author of the Hiſtory of American Jacobins. "Nor," ſays he, "were marks of *ferocity* wanting: At a dinner at Philadelphia "(at which a *perſon high in office* was preſent) a *roaſted* pig became the "Repreſentative of Louis the 16th, and it being the Anniverſary "of his murder, the pig's head was ſevered from his body, and then "carried round to each of the convives, who, after placing the Liber-"ty-cap upon his own head, pronounced the word *Tyrant*, and gave "the poor little animal's head a chop with his knife."

What may be yet the fate of thoſe excellent men, and of that vaſt Country which they are endeavouring to ſave from itſelf, Heaven only knows. It is long ſince ADAMS, the preſent Preſident (raiſed to that dignity againſt the efforts of the Jacobins, by a majority of three voices), gave his opinion, as plainly as prudence would admit, that the American Conſtitution was but a fair-weather bark, and not calculated for political ſtorms. "The United States," ſays he in the preface of his excellent work on *Republics*, "are "large and populous Nations, in compariſon of "the Grecian Commonwealths, or even the "Swiſs Cantons, and are growing every day "more diſproportionate, and therefore leſs capa-"ble of being held together by ſimple Govern-"ments. Countries that increaſe ſo rapidly as "the States of America did, even during ſuch an "impoveriſhing and deſtructive War as the laſt, "are not to be bound long with ſilk threads: li-"ons, young or old, will not be reſtrained by "cobwebs." Enough, however, has happened there already, to teach all who are ſuſceptible of inſtruction, that to undertake to conciliate Jacobins, is to "caſt pearls before ſwine." They "will trample them under their feet," "as the Scripture ſays, "and *turn again and rend you.*"

But we not only can tell what this gentleman's ſpecific of *timely conceſſion* would *not* have effect-ed;

ed; we can alſo aſcertain its *poſitive* effects, from much ſtronger authority than the viſions of his high-raiſed fancy. We have been informed on this ſubject by the United Iriſhmen themſelves. The well-known Author of "a Letter to Lord "FITZWILLIAM," already mentioned as the mouth-piece of that fraternity, very frankly declares, on behalf of his Brethren, "that *any* "*kind of Reform*, ſincerely put into execution, "would do *much* to *pleaſe*, but *not* to SATISFY, "the People. *Any* Reform," ſays he, "once "made, would make EVERY *Reform* afterward "more eaſy; when adopted it would tend to "perfect itſelf. It may walk on as Catholic "Emancipation, from *gradual* to TOTAL."*— What *total Reform* means in the vocabulary of the United Iriſhmen, need not be explained. The Right Hon. Gentleman himſelf is aware, that it threatens conſequences which no one can contemplate without *horror* and *diſmay*.

Of the weighty truth of Doctor DRENNAN'S *candid* acknowledgment, the leading Members of the Iriſh Legiſlature were juſt as well apprized (however a *few* in that Aſſembly might have contrived to ſhut their eyes), as the United Iriſhmen themſelves. Reaſon told them, that if they ſhould once begin to alter the frame-work of the Conſtitution, merely in obedience to the call of Aggregate Meetings and Primary Aſſem-

 blies,

* Drennan's Letter to Earl Fitzwilliam.—1795.

blies, it would be impoſſible to reſtrain the wantonneſs of ſpeculation: that every conceſſion would beget new demands, and furniſh a precedent for their being complied with; and that at each ſtep, the claimants muſt grow ſtronger, and they themſelves become ſtill leſs capable of reſiſtance. They knew alſo from their own experience, that however proper it might be to adopt new meaſures on the ground of unqueſtionable utility, it was idle to expect much even from theſe, in the way of popular gratification. They themſelves had done more of this kind than perhaps any cotemporary Government upon earth. They had raiſed the *Iriſh Catholics* from the wretchedneſs to which the ſeverity of the Penal Code had reduced them, to every thing but Dominion. They had relieved the loweſt claſſes from the only direct tax that they ſuffered, the Hearth Duty. They had complied with popular wiſhes of a more elevated kind, by adopting various Laws, tending to aſſimilate more perfectly the *Iriſh* to the *Britiſh Conſtitution*. They were even making arrangements in the *Election Laws*, which implied a degree of ſubſtantial *Parliamentary Reform* already, and which, by being gradually extended (as no one could doubt but they would be, if frantic turbulence would but leave ſcope for the free exerciſe of reaſon), would effect by ſafe, but ſure degrees, every thing that the true intereſts of the Country could require. And yet

yet after all, they have ſeen the populace more agitated and reſtleſs than ever; the ignorant vulgar panting for they know not what; their inſidious ſeducers burning for Revolutionary Power; and human Wolves and Tygers already burſting, in horrid herds, through the fences of the Community, to gorge themſelves with the blood of the innocent and the ſpoils of the induſtrious. And ought they then, in the frantic hope of appeaſing theſe implacable beaſts, to have weakened thoſe fences ſtill more, or perhaps broken them down entirely? Ought they to have conceded *that* which the claimants themſelves acknowledged, they only aſked for hoſtile purpoſes, merely to diſarm the Government and to arm themſelves? The Right Hon. Gentleman aſſerts *they ought*, and imputes their doing otherwiſe to "ſhort-ſighted pride and obſtinacy." "In their "ſhort-ſighted pride and obſtinacy," ſays he, "they turned a deaf ear to the ſupplicant, and "they have now perhaps in the open field to "brave the aſſertor."

To that *ſhort-ſighted pride* and *obſtinacy*, as this Gentleman, with perhaps far *ſhorter-ſighted pride*, and much more invincible *obſtinacy*, is pleaſed to miſcall it, it is to be aſcribed, that we have at this moment leſs and leſs reaſon to apprehend the accompliſhment of his gloomy predictions. It was this ſteady reſiſtance to crude and incongruous

ous theory, which has kept the political power of the State unmutilated and vigorous, and by that means ſecured a reſource for property and life, when the energy of the Law was cramped by that chilling dread, which made the coward perjure himſelf, and drove even the honeſt man from the Jury-box. Had they been leſs "*proud*" and leſs "*obſtinate*," we never ſhould have witneſſed thoſe ſalutary exertions, which have already obliged the combined traitors in the province of Ulſter to deliver up thoſe hidden ſtores of weapons which they had provided againſt the day of ſlaughter and themſelves to come in, in crowds, to lay hold on the proffered mercy.* The oppoſition made to ſuch meaſures, if any ſuch meaſures could have been propoſed at all, would not have been that ſilly contemptible diſplay of malice mingled with weakneſs which we have lately witneſſed, and which ſerved only to remind us of the *viper* and the *file*. They would have been ſcouted at once by a mob-dependent majority. The Executive Government, unnerved by an overbearing Faction, would have been, not as *now*, the awe and dread, but the ſcorn and deriſion of high-creſted Jacobiniſm. Sure enough there might have been no room for "braving its aſſertors in the open field." They would have obtained an eaſier and a ſpeedier triumph by a *Parliament*

* See the laſt Report of the Secret Committee of the Houſe of Commons.—Pages 10 and 11.—Iriſh Edition.

Parliament formed to their wiſh or pliant to their Will. What the caſt and character of *ſuch* a Parliament would have been, we may calculate by the *few* who even now dare to pollute the Iriſh Senate by rank effuſions of Sedition. What its moſt moderate meaſures would have been, we may alſo infer, from that late proof of vile ſuccumbency to even the vulgarities of Democracy, their *new modelled Reform Bill*; an inſtance of departure from their own former principles and profeſſions, at once ſo abſurd, ſo mean and ſo hypocritical, that the mover of ſuch a Bill, in order to be in character with his work, ought previouſly to have been *unpowdered* and *cropt*, and have named himſelf *Egalité*.

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

THOUGHTS

ON THE

WILL OF THE PEOPLE,

FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE YEAR 1794,

WITH A

POSTSCRIPT

NOT PUBLISHED BEFORE.

THOUGHTS

ON THE

WILL OF THE PEOPLE.

IT has no doubt been frequently obſerved, that in the various publications, by which the Votaries of Democracy, whether in France, Great Britain, or Ireland, have laboured to ſpread their principles, and promote their ſchemes, there is no one expreſſion which occurs ſo frequently as "The Public Will," or, "The Will of the Peo-"ple." Of *this*, we are ſometimes told, that Law is, or ought to be the expreſſion; of *this*, it has been ſaid that the Legiſlature ſhould be the organ; and in this country in particular, in order to convince us at once that Parliamentary Reform is indiſpenſable, we have been aſſured, that the Houſe of Commons in its preſent ſtate "is "not calculated to expreſs our deliberate *Will* on "any ſubject of importance."

That ſo many different perſons ſhould agree in uſing the ſame words, without attaching to them a determinate meaning, is incredible; nor can it be ſuppoſed, that they ſhould repeat the expreſſion, ſo very frequently as they have done, unleſs the ſenſe which it conveyed was deemed to be of conſequence; we may therefore fairly conclude that this term "The Will of the People," expreſſes a notion which thoſe gentlemen have well weighed and conſidered, and that it conſtitutes a ſort of foundation ſtone in their ſyſtem.

What the friends of Democracy in this country mean by "The People," they have left us at no loſs to determine; we know from their repeated declarations, that by this term they intend the whole aggregate of males who have attained the age of twenty-one years, vagabonds and inſane perſons excepted. Now as this definition is too plain to admit illuſtration, all that remains for us to enquire, is, what we are to underſtand by the *Will* of this numerous Body.

And here we can ſcarcely miſtake, becauſe if we take for our guide the uſe of words in common ſpeech, which, in this inſtance particularly, is alone competent to direct us, we can only underſtand this term in one poſſible ſenſe, viz. "The good pleaſure, or optional determination "of the People." And as in our common conduct

duct we never think of exercising our *Will*, except in those cases where we are at liberty to act as we think proper, it follows, that in order to make sense of the expression in question, it must be supposed to imply that the great Body of the People have an inherent right to act in all political matters *as they please*, without restriction or limitation.

Having thus fixed the meaning of the term, let us calmly inquire into its propriety. And here we cannot avoid observing, that persons in their *Reason* very seldom talk about their *Will*. A man of common sense, or of common politeness, finds himself so bound on every side, by the numberless claims and engagements, the greater and the lesser duties of social life, that scarcely in a single case does he profess to act merely as he pleases. If, in any indifferent manner, he actually uses this prerogative, his understanding or his modesty, makes him cautious in an avowal which might be more likely to evince the obstinacy than the dignity of his nature.

But, in matters of a moral nature, where the principles of truth or justice are in question, to talk of *Will* would be considered as involving an absurdity too gross to be tolerated. If, for instance, a Judge on the Bench should say, "it is my

"*Will*

" *Will* that ſuch a ſentence ſhould be executed;" if a jury ſhould pronounce it their *Will*, that this or that perſon ſhould be deemed guilty; if even an Arbitrator between two diſputants ſhould declare it his *Will*, that the matter in diſpute ſhould be thus or thus determined, would not every perſon who heard it be ſhocked at the grievouſneſs of the nonſenſe, and reſolve it into abſolute inſanity? And yet, if we conſider for a moment, we muſt be ſenſible, that the rule holds equally good in every caſe where God or our neighbour has claims upon us, and that conſequently it is equal madneſs to think or ſpeak of uſing our *Will*, in any matter where we are bound by the laws of nature or of ſociety to act in order to a certain end, and to adhere to certain determinate rules of conduct.

Now, whatever force theſe obſervations may have reſpecting individuals, they have infinitely greater force with regard to ſociety at large. For it muſt be granted that an individual may ſometimes uſe his *Will*, that is, he may in ſome caſes act *as he pleaſes*. For inſtance, he may generally chuſe the colour or the faſhion of his coat; or he may, for the moſt part, determine whether he will wear his own hair or a peruke; or, if he does not live in the faſhionable world, he may fix the hour of his meals, or of his riſing up and lying down; becauſe theſe and ſuch like matters

matters are compleatly indifferent, they terminate in a man's ſelf, and are followed by no conſequences. But in matters which concern ſociety, nothing is indifferent. Every movement has its effects, every ſtep more or leſs affects human happineſs. Here, therefore, there is no room, no imaginable pretence for talking about Will, becauſe in no poſſible caſe are we left to act *as we pleaſe*. In every inſtance we are bound by the moſt ſolemn and irreverſible obligations that the laws of our Nature can lay upon us, to purſue one determinate end, *the Public Good*, and in doing ſo, to adhere as uniformly to the guidance of reaſon, of judgment, and of conſcience, as any Arbitrator, Juror, or Judge in the world.

To place this matter, if poſſible, in a ſtill ſtronger light, let it be conſidered that the acting part of political Society never act merely for themſelves. In all communities, even thoſe of the moſt popular form, there muſt be a very numerous portion, who, either from age or ſex, are incapable of taking any ſhare in the management of the ſtate, although they are as really intereſted in its concerns, as its moſt efficient members. Of theſe, therefore, the acting Members of the Community are the Guardians or Truſtees; and they are not only under every obligation that can be ſuppoſed to exiſt in a common truſt, but under infinitely greater ones; in as much

much as infinitely greater evils may ariſe from their miſconduct. Now, what ſhould we think of the Guardians of a Minor, or the Truſtees of a Public Charity, who, in any matter relative to their charge, would talk of exerciſing *their Will?* Would we not inſtantly conclude that they had loſt either all underſtanding or all conſcience, and that, in either view, they were utterly unqualified for their functions? Is it then poſſible to conceive any thing more exquiſitely abſurd, than for one moment to admit ſuch a ſentiment, or uſe ſuch an expreſſion, in a caſe where the ſanctity of the truſt riſes beyond all proportion, where the happineſs of millions is perpetually at ſtake, and where conſequently thoſe who act are under the moſt awful reſponſibility to God, to their country, and to poſterity?

If, however, the term in queſtion was merely abſurd, it might be ſuffered with a thouſand other abſurdities to paſs quietly down the ſtream of time into the dark and ſilent gulph of oblivion; but it is much more than abſurd, it is miſchievous, becauſe it leads directly to opinions and principles the moſt deſtructive to the peace and happineſs of ſociety that it is poſſible for the human mind to conceive.

It is ſomewhat extraordinary that gentlemen who hold themſelves forth as the determined champions

Champions of Liberty, ſhould at the very time when they are burning with zeal for the Rights of Man, ruſh into the very extreme of Deſpotiſm. Strange however as this may appear, it is neither more nor leſs than the ſimple fact, and whoever conſiders their ſyſtem with candid attention will ſpeedily be convinced, that while they declaim againſt the exiſting Government as oppreſſive and injurious, the principles which they themſelves have adopted, tend directly to the moſt deſperate ſpecies of arbitrary Government that ever the earth was curſed with.

The eſſential character of Arbitrary Power does not conſiſt in the Government being in the hands of one, or of a few perſons; it conſiſts ſimply in its being *a Government of* WILL. And as the Government becomes more arbitrary in proportion as the Will on which it depends is leſs liable to reſtraint, ſo when that *will* is ſubject to no reſtraint whatever, then deſpotiſm has attained its perfection, it has arrived at that point which it cannot paſs. Now, although it is undeniable that the ſubjection of a whole community to the *Will* of one or of a few perſons is a very wretched degradation, yet in this caſe the evil, though ſevere, is ſeldom deſperate. Reſtraints are felt by the Government, though they may not be acknowledged. The Political power is in ſome de-

gree checked and counterbalanced by the phyſical force of the People; and in order to ſecure the permanency of the Power and the tranquillity of the People, ſome regard muſt be had to the laws of Juſtice, Humanity and Decorum. Theſe, therefore, as well as other circumſtances, which it would be eaſy to adduce, have at leaſt a palliative operation; and we find accordingly, that at this day no Monarchy nor Ariſtocracy in Europe furniſhes an example of pure, unmixed, practical deſpotiſm. But when the multitude in any country is unfortunate enough to poſſeſs itſelf of the Sovereign Power, when the People, inſtead of deſtroying deſpotiſm, actually aſſume the place of the deſpot, and in lieu of his Will ſubſtitute their own, there, arbitrary Government appears in its moſt finiſhed form; there it admits of no correction, no palliation; its power is as unlimited as the will on which it depends abſolute; it is phyſically as well as politically ſupreme; and not being under any neceſſity of attending to thoſe principles which are binding upon individual man, it exerciſes almoſt the omnipotence of a God.

Let us for a moment picture to ourſelves the ſtate of things which in ſuch circumſtances muſt neceſſarily take place. Let us ſuppoſe the People, the mixt multitude, ſet compleatly free from every reſtraint which had been impoſed upon them

them by the habits and cuſtoms of regular ſociety, the gradations of rank, the inſtitutions of civil polity, and the authority of Government, and in a ſituation not only to pronounce their *Will*, but when pronounced to enforce it. Let us ſuppoſe them to be fully poſſeſſed of the opinion that *the Sovereignty* is *in themſelves*, and that *their Will* is *the Supreme Law*, and laſtly, let us ſuppoſe them to know and feel their own ſtrength, and to be ſatisfied that whatever they may determine upon, *muſt infallibly be ſubmitted to*; (for the Sovereignty of the Public Will implies all theſe particulars, or it means nothing at all:) and then let us ſee whether we can form an idea of a ſtate of ſociety, in which the ſituation of individuals could be more hazardous, in which there would be leſs ſecurity for Property, for Liberty, or for Life, in which freedom of ſpeech would be more compleatly annihilated, in which meek virtue and modeſt worth would be more helpleſsly expoſed to the inſults and injuries of ſavage ferocity and brutal violence; in a word, in which there would be a more calamitous conjunction of uncontroulable deſpotiſm and frantic anarchy.

In this Empire of the Public Will let us imagine a caſe not only probable but inevitable. A difference of opinion to ariſe on ſome ſubject of

 importance.

importance. We need not aſk with whom the power of pronouncing the Will of the People would reſide; we know it would of neceſſity belong to *the Numerical Majority*. But it may concern us to enquire what might be the ſituation of the *Minority* on ſuch an occaſion? Would their opponents certainly confine themſelves to the mere weapons of reaſon and argument? In caſe the unſucceſsful few ſhould be betrayed into any of thoſe aſperities of language, thoſe figures of enraged rhetorick, in which diſappointed oppoſition is prone to vent itſelf, would the *many*, triumphant in their ſucceſs, and taught by the firſt principles of their ſyſtem to *command* rather than to *reaſon*, be, notwithſtanding, patient and liberal, and refrain from uſing the force of which they would be poſſeſſed? If in any inſtance they ſhould ſo far riſe above the common infirmities of human nature, it would be at moſt a precarious forbearance, to be admired rather than relied upon. But if, as might much more naturally be expected, they ſhould yield to thoſe paſſions, to which majorities are no leſs liable than minorities, and on which in their caſe there could be no poſſible controul; if in the inſolence of elation, they ſhould be led to conſider the vanquiſhed party as rebels againſt their *Will*, and traitors to their *Sovereignty*, and if in conſequence, they ſhould ſend them by hundreds to priſon, or by ſcores to the Gibbet or the Guillotine; to what quarter

quarter under Heaven could the deplorable victims betake themſelves, to what tribunal appeal, to what umpire commit their cauſe? Could they hope to move the Public Will by expoſtulation, or to ſoften it by intreaty? Alas! Mercy is no attribute of an impaſſioned multitude. The Majeſty of the People is too much deafened by its own noiſe to hear the ſtill voice of perſonal anguiſh. What then remains? Merely to ſubmit, to imitate the Canadian ſavage, who caught in the vortex of Niagara and knowing that it is in vain to ſtruggle, lies down in his canoe, and reſigns himſelf without an effort to the headlong violence of the cataract.

To evince the juſtneſs of this melancholy ſtatement, we need not unrol the volume of hiſtory. The principle itſelf, as well as the compleat exemplification of it, ſeems to have been reſerved for our own times, and if we ruſh into the gulph, it muſt be with our eyes open. For to what ſource can we trace the matchleſs miſeries of that wretched country, which is at this day both the deteſtation and the dread of all the thinking part of Europe, but to the prevalence of that execrable doctrine, *the* SOVEREIGNTY OF THE PUBLIC WILL? *This* their falſe philoſophers had ſtrenuouſly inculcated, and *this* their ſpeculative politicians had ſtill more unfortunately recognized and adopted. And when once this maddening principle

principle was ſent abroad amongſt the People, it was in vain afterwards to ſay, " it ſhall operate " in this or that particular mode." When the Will of the People was acknowledged to be ſovereign, it was nugatory in the extreme to tell them, you ſhall not act by yourſelves but by your repreſentatives. Who was competent to tell them this? The moſt ignorant fool in the community muſt have detected the groſsneſs of the inconſiſtency, and have felt that if the Public Will was ſovereign, no derived power could preſcribe to it a mode of operation. He muſt at once have been ſenſible, that if law was nothing but the expreſſion of that Will, and magiſtracy nothing but its agent, the one muſt be revocable, and the other diſmiſſible at pleaſure; and that conſequently obſervance of the one and obedience to the other muſt be compleatly optional both with reſpect to degree and continuance. So much, I ſay, every illiterate ſavage was competent to underſtand, and prompt to practice. But the metaphyſical niceties of general and individual Will, of the whole community and its parts, thoſe cobweb threads, by which the Giant, after being turned looſe, was to be bound to his good behaviour, theſe were objects too minute for the opticks of the populace to perceive. Theſe, therefore, were ſent back to the legiſlators, as raw materials for that bauble of a conſtitution,

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the elaborate work of years*, and the plaything of days, admired, as children do their toys, for a moment, and then torn to pieces. Here, therefore, in the inebriating force of this ardent ſpirit of falſe philoſophy, we find the cauſe, the adequate, the neceſſitating cauſe of every thing that followed. Of the ſolemn adoption and giddy violation of engagement after engagement, and oath after oath. Of the rapid ſucceſſion of faction to faction, each in its turn beginning its career in the plenitude of popular confidence, and terminating it in the murky dungeon, or on the enſanguined Scaffold. Of the domineering inſolence of the galleries, and the vile and vicious ſubmiſſion of the ſenate. Of the more than Turkiſh deſpotiſm of the reigning demagogues, and the more than Cannibal cruelty of the inſurgent multitude. Of the ſportive carnage, the cold deliberate maſſacre, the mock trial, and the accumulated execution. In a word, of that ſeries of unparalleled enormities at which a Nero or a Domitian might have ſhuddered, and which late poſterity will be apt to conſider, not as hiſtoric facts, but as the melancholy fictions of a dark and diſturbed fancy.

And will any man in his reaſon pretend to aſſert that the populace of whatever country, if taught

* The Committee of Conſtitution was appointed July 6, 1789, and the Conſtitution was accepted by the King, September 14th, 1791.

taught the ſame leſſon, and poſſeſſed of the ſame power, would not purſue the ſame, or nearly the ſame conduct? The populace of all countries is pretty nearly of that deſcription which we commonly call *the Mob*. And to ſuppoſe that an Iriſh Mob would "bear its faculties more meek," or be one whit purer "in its great office" than a French Mob, is an aſſumption which neither reaſon nor experience will warrant. But in truth, whether it would or would not, muſt reſt entirely with its own majeſtic ſelf. It would be utterly impoſſible to draw any certain line between its actual ſovereignty and the moſt extreme exerciſe of it. For as no earthly power could preſume to controul the ſupremacy of its Will, ſo no finite wiſdom could pretend to aſcertain the particular line of conduct it might *be pleaſed* to purſue. Conjecture reſpecting the future would be almoſt as idle as complaint concerning the preſent, or animadverſion upon the paſt. And if any rule of conduct approaching to certainty could be thought of, where irreſiſtible power would be directed by capricious verſatility, it would be this and this only, that knowledge, wiſdom, induſtry and virtue, would on all occaſions be out-numbered, inſulted, and trampled on by ignorance, folly, idleneſs and profligacy.

To what has been ſaid, I can think but of one plauſible objection, viz. that when thoſe gentlemen ſpeak of the Public Will, they do not mean

mere

mere authoritative Will, but *Will directed by reaſon*. I apprehend this is pretty much the ſame as if they ſhould ſay, that when they ſpeak of *Will*, they do not mean *Will* but *Reaſon*. To this therefore I ſhould make but a very ſhort reply. If they mean *Reaſon*, why do they not ſay ſo? *Reaſon* is as ready a term, as intelligible a term, and an infinitely leſs dangerous term than *Will*, which after all muſt imply the *the optional irreſponſible determination* of the party to whom it is aſcribed, or it involves a palpable abſurdity. But in truth, when we conſider the nature and character of the party to whom in this inſtance it is attributed, we muſt conclude that it cannot mean *Reaſon*. Who would either think or ſpeak of the *Reaſon* of the numerical multitude, the aggregate of males of twenty-one years and upwards, or even of the *Reaſon* of the majority of this maſs? Theſe gentlemen are certainly too wiſe not to know that a Multitude cannot *reaſon*. The comparing one propoſition with another, weighing their reſpective pretenſions to truth and right, and drawing concluſions is much too minute a work for ſo vaſt a body. Beſides the certain incapacity of the greater part, the number itſelf is an inſuperable hindrance. If ten thouſand *Solons* were collected, their wiſdom would be inoperative; it would be loſt in the chaos of diſſonant opinions, or the colliſion of jarring paſſions. *Reaſon*, therefore, in this caſe, it muſt be

acknowledged, would have been the moſt improper term that could have been thought of; and, we muſt add, that *Will* is, on the contrary, the moſt appoſite term imaginable; becauſe what a multitude wants in *Reaſon*, it certainly poſſeſſes in *Will*. It may not be able to *argue*, but it is well and fully able to *command*; and it muſt be owned, that in the criſis of a Revolution, one word of command from the ſovereign People would have more energy than ten thouſand Reaſons from a thouſand Philoſophers.

And might it not be ſuſpected, that this obvious efficacy of the public *Will* is one reaſon, at leaſt, why thoſe gentlemen have preferred the term? They want to achieve great things; they have a maſſy ſtructure to demoliſh, and will of courſe have ponderous ruins to remove or blow up. For theſe vaſt purpoſes, the ſlow cautious operation of *Reaſon* would be obviouſly unfit. It would be apter to embarraſs and retard, than promote or facilitate. But the *Fiat* of the multitude would operate with as much expedition as the *hey-preſto* of a conjuror. It would ſerve as a ſort of political gunpowder, and be as uſeful to our projectors as the nitrous grain was to Sir Chriſtopher Wren, when preparing the ground for St. Paul's Cathedral. At one burſt it would be ſufficient to rend in pieces the beſt cemented work of ages, and ſcatter the component parts

parts into diſtant lands. It might indeed be leſs applicable to the buſineſs of raiſing a new ſtructure; but this is a remote, if not an unneceſſary conſideration, and evidently makes no eſſential part of the preſent plan. For it muſt be obvious to every perſon, that if the Public Will were once fairly eſtabliſhed, it would effectually ſuperſede the labour of Conſtitution-making. The ſimplicity of this principle would need no ſtandard to direct its movements, and the ſupremacy of it would admit none. *Conſtitutions*, therefore, would be completely nugatory, mere ſyſtems of Reſolves, reſcindible *ad libitum*, and affording no ſort of ſecurity to individuals againſt the ſovereign power, nor to the minority againſt the majority. "The Will of the People," as *Rouſſeau* obſerves, with more than his uſual conſiſtency, "expreſſed by a majority of votes, "which can enforce obedience to the Sovereign "Power, cannot bind the Sovereign Power to "itſelf—and there can be no fundamental obli- "gatory law eſtabliſhed for the Body of the "People, not even the Social Contract*."—Conſtitutions, of courſe, however ingeniouſly conſtructed, could only ſerve the purpoſes of printers and paſtry cooks, firſt employing the preſſes of the former, and then furniſhing waſte paper for the latter.

* Social Contract. Dublin Edit. 1791. Book 1. Chap. 7.

But there may be another, and perhaps not a leſs powerful motive to the uſe of the term in queſtion. To every perſon who has read the publications of the United Iriſhmen, it muſt be apparent, that, be their intent wicked or charitable, they are always labouring *ad captandum vulgus*. They make their appeal, uniformly, to the great maſs of the people; they adapt their arguments to the views and feelings of the loweſt claſs; and they even intreat the individuals of that claſs to hang up their Plan of Reform (as they are pleaſed to call it) in their reſpective cottages. All, it is evident, to rouze this numerous body to make uſe of its natural energies, in order to extort from the monopolizing few (i. e. from thoſe who have been more induſtrious, more prudent, or more fortunate) a due proportion of power and property. Now, on this ſtimulative plan it muſt be acknowledged, that the *Public Reaſon* would be the moſt unfit term, and that the *Public Will* is the propereſt term which the copiouſneſs of language could furniſh. Talk to a day-labourer of Public Reaſon. If he underſtood you at all he would form an idea of a principle ſo cold in its nature, and ſo ſlow in its operation, as to give him no proſpect of that near and ſenſible advantage, which alone is adequate to rouze thoſe minds to action whoſe views extend little beyond the preſent hour. On the other hand, talk to him of *the Public Will*; he

he will think immediately of ſomething which is as rapid as it is irreſiſtible, which is fully equal at once to melt down "the happineſs which is" now "heaped up in mounds and to diffuſe it "amongſt the million."* Again, the cottager, ignorant and illiterate as he is, would be apt to perceive, that if the *Reaſon* of the People were to be the ſtandard of Law and Government, the ſtate of things would be nearly as diſtant from that beloved *Equality* which he has been taught to expect, as it is at preſent; becauſe even he muſt be ſenſible that intellectual ability is almoſt as unequally diſtributed as wealth itſelf; that thoſe who poſſeſs it in any degree, are almoſt as limited in number as thoſe who at preſent govern the ſtate; and that conſequently he and his brethren of the multitude, would be as completely diſtanced in the political race, as they are at this day. On this plan, therefore, the honeſt man could hardly be induced, to exert himſelf he knows not why, and to gain he knows not what. But ſpeak to the ſame perſon of the *Public Will*; he finds every thing in that idea which his heart can deſire; he feels that in *Will* there is complete Equality; for he is conſcious that he could be as obſtinate in his *determinations*, and as imperious in his *commands*, as the wiſeſt man in the community. He, of courſe,

* See Eſſay xvii.—Page 149.

courſe, takes fire at the thought; he riſes in his own eſtimation, feels himſelf already an integrant part of the Sovereignty; and glowing alternately with indignation at his viſionary wrongs, and with delight at the no leſs viſionary happineſs which preſents itſelf to his view, he looks forward with impatience to the hour, when he is to graſp the Bludgeon or the Pike in ſupport of his indefeaſible claims.

One reaſon more, and perhaps not the leaſt influential, may ſtill remain. Thoſe Gentlemen muſt be perfectly aware that after every change in the political ſyſtem which the genius of verſatility can ſuggeſt, ſome kind of government muſt ſtill remain, and that government muſt be neceſſarily managed by a Few. But in caſe they could carry into practice their plan of reform, they cannot entertain a doubt that the populace, indebted as they would be, to *their* exertions, would not fail to put into *their* hands the ſuperintendence of the public rights, and the adminiſtration of the public ſovereignty. Now it is certain, that no man or men, who at any time have either been poſſeſſed of power, or hoped to poſſeſs it, ever harboured the thought that that power was too ſummary or too extenſive. It is therefore the moſt natural thing in the world that thoſe worthy patriots, conſcious, as they muſt be, of their own *upright Intentions*, and *pure love of their*

their country, ſhould have an eye, in their preſent language, to their future ſituation; and carefully avoid even the verbal adoption of any principle by which their own hands might be tied up, or thoſe of their enemies armed againſt them. To errors of this kind, both the *Conſtitutionaliſts* and the *Briſſotins* in France fell a ſacrifice; and perhaps their Iriſh copyiſts have learned wiſdom from their example. I by no means affirm that thoſe Gentlemen have actually ſuch an intention; but this I will ſay, that if they have, they could not have adopted a mode of expreſſion more perfectly ſuitable to ſuch a deſign. For if, as I have endeavoured to ſhew, the Sovereignty of the Public Will implies the moſt abſolute and uncontroulable power, and if (as every perſon will allow to be likely) thoſe Gentlemen ſhould become the Agents and Truſtees of that Sovereignty, it will follow that thoſe Gentlemen would then be in poſſeſſionof a power compared with which the Dictatorſhip of *Julius Cæſar* would be a trifle. And the only poſſible obſtacle to the complete exerciſe of this power would be the introduction of the notion of *Reaſon*. For this, as has been already obſerved, would directly militate againſt the idea of complete equality. It would of courſe excite jealouſy and ſuſpicion, and would aſſuredly leave room for another claſs of Demagogues to come forward,

forward, who, by uſing a more palatable language, would catch the ear of the multitude, firſt ſupplant their predeceſſors, and then trample them down. But by adopting at once the ſimple idea of the *Will of the People*, they poſſeſs themſelves of the very Palladium of oligarchick Deſpotiſm. They go at once to the extreme of theory, where they are equally ſafe from ſuſpicion, controul, or ſupplantation. They leave no room for any Rival to go beyond them, and the more bold and overbearing they are in their language, and the more ſummary in their conduct towards thoſe who may happen to be obnoxious to them, the more fully will the populace be perſuaded that the power which they ſee exerciſed is a direct emanation from themſelves, and that thoſe who actually manage both it and them, are but the Eagles who bear the Thunder of the Sovereign People.

On the whole then, let me intreat the ſober, moderate, intelligent Part of the Community, who, I humbly hope, will attend to theſe remarks, and of whoſe approbation alone I am ambitious, to aſk their own underſtandings, to conſult their own feelings, whether the *Sovereignty of the Public Will* or the *Will of the People*, is not a principle in every point of view ruinous and deteſtable. Whether it is not a monſter in politicks, which even poetic fiction is inadequate

inadequate to deſcribe a blind and ſhapeleſs thing, which adds, to the mutability of Proteus, the hands of Briareus, and the heads of the Hydra? And whether thoſe men, who knowingly and wilfully perſevere in diſſeminating and inculcating it upon the ignorant and the unthinking, may not juſtly be conſidered as candidates for the prieſthood of that Bloody God, to whom weakneſs and innocence were offered up in ſacrifice, amidſt the clangour of Drums and Trumpets.

POSTSCRIPT

TO

THOUGHTS

ON THE

WILL OF THE PEOPLE.

Nov. 1, 1795.

IF the reader does not conſider the half hour, he has given to the preceding Pages, as wholly thrown away, I entreat him to accompany me through a few Paragraphs more. They are the reſult of ſubſequent reflection, and may perhaps tend both to throw additional light on the ſubject, and to render the remarks which I have offered, more applicable to the actual circumſtances of the day.

It is generally acknowledged, that nothing has contributed more to excite the revolutionary *Mania* by which Europe has been agitated, than that well known work of *Rouſſeau*, the *Contrât Social.* The leading principle of this Book, which *Rouſſeau* lays down as the foundation of his whole ſyſtem, is the very doctrine which I have combated, viz. that the general or public Will is the only legitimate ſource of law, and the very Eſſence of Sovereignty.

Conſidering *Rouſſeau* therefore, as the Apoſtle of modern democracy, I attended particularly to his poſitions, and moſt of all in the definition of terms; at the ſame time not loſing ſight, either of the *practical* Elucidations of his Diſciples in France, or of the Comments and Paraphraſes of his equally willing, but (thanks be to Heaven) leſs able followers in our own Country and in Great Britain.

The People I ſtated to mean, in the Democratick Vocabulary, the numerical aggregate of Males in a Community. My readers will recollect how fully I was warranted in this, by the repeated and wide-ſpread publications of the United Iriſhmen; and, let me now obſerve that I was equally ſupported by the Doctrines of their Political Patriarch. "In order" ſays *Rouſſeau* "to the Will being general, it is not "neceſſary that it ſhould be unanimous; but it is neceſſary that all the Voices be counted, for "*every formal excluſion* breaks the generality of "the Will."* I ſaid alſo, that in order to make ſenſe of the expreſſion, the Public Will, or the Will of the People, it muſt be ſuppoſed to imply, that the People have an inherent right to act as they pleaſe, without reſtriction or limitation; and this too *Rouſſeau* maintains in ſtill ſtronger

* *Contrât Social.* Book II. Chap. 2. Page 44: Note, Paris Edition of 1790.

ſtronger terms. " In every ſtate of the caſe, ſays he," (i. e. be it right or wrong) " the People are " Maſters of their own laws, and may change " even the beſt laws; for if they chuſe to do " themſelves an injury who has a right to pre- " vent them?"†

Now, what is to be inferred? Evidently that the Will of the People, as expreſſed by the numerical Majority is, according to the Democratic Creed, paramount to every thing, to individual and ſocial happineſs, to the principles of reaſon and juſtice, to the laws of nature and the commands of God; and it follows on the whole, that I have not attacked a Phantom of my own Creation, but on the contrary, a real political monſter, and preciſely in the form in which it iſſued from the perturbed brain in which it was gendered.

But, after all, it is fair to remark that although *Rouſſeau* diſcovers all a Father's fondneſs for this wayward offspring of his fancy, his mode of managing it proves that he was ſomewhat jealous of its tendencies. Almoſt at the moment of its production, he ſets himſelf to ſwathe its gigantic Limbs with multiplied reſtrictions, and places it within the windings of a logical Labyrinth, perplexed as that of *Crete*; intending perhaps little more than that it ſhould ſerve as a ſort of Bugbear to keep Kings and Stateſmen to their good behaviour

† Book II. Chap. 12. Pages 94 and 95.

behaviour, as nurſes ſcare unruly children by telling them of Hobgoblins. Little did he imagine that the period was juſt at hand, when his frantic followers, ſmit with ſtrange love, would penetrate his Labyrinth, diſſolve his Ligatures, and turn looſe the full grown Fury, horribly hiſſing, and burning with the thirſt of blood, upon a devoted World.

The ſimple truth is, that *Rouſſeau*, though as I have obſerved, the father of theſe new doctrines, held them himſelf with ſtrange inconſiſtency. At one time we ſee him (as in the above cited Paſſage,) exhibiting the Supremacy of the Public Will not only in all its ſtrength, but in all its horrors. At another time he would fain reſtrain its exerciſe with infinite Limitations, in order to do what he himſelf had declared, no one had a right to do, to keep the many-headed Sovereign from injuring itſelf. Sometimes we are told the general Will is always right, nor can it even have the inclination to injure the ſubject;* it is in effect every man's own will,† and therefore in obeying it, a man only obeys himſelf. Again, nay on ſome occaſions almoſt in the ſame breath, the Public Will may err under the influence of deception;‡ through the predominance of a powerful faction it may degenerate into the mere Will of an Individual

* *Contrât Social.* Book II. Chap. 3. Page 47. and Chap. 4. Page 51. † Book II. Chap. 4. Page 55. and Chap. 6. Page 64. ‡ Book II. Chap. 3. Page 47.

vidual;§ and even the Will of All may not be the general Will, becauſe the former is not neceſſarily more than a collection of the Wills of Individuals.‖ Once more, in order to the Will being general, it is neceſſary that the People ſhall have no previous communication with each other, but that each ſpeak his opinion entirely from himſelf;* and yet we are aſſured on the other hand that all have need of Guides ſome, to make their Wills conformable to their Reaſon; and others, to teach them what it is they wiſh to obtain.† Nay on ſome occaſions it may be neceſſary to trepan them into happineſs, by pretending a divine commiſſion from Heaven; and to do this effectually is, in the Judgment of *Rouſſeau*, the mark of a magnanimous and comprehenſive mind.‡

Had the French Philoſophers delayed their political experiments, until they had aſſimilated all theſe jarring Elements, their projects would have been as inefficient as the golden dreams of the Alchymiſts. They therefore went to work in another way. It was no difficult thing for their maſter to combine contradictions; he had only to form a theory and write a Book; their grander deſtiny was to regenerate a nation. What therefore they could not apply ſimultaneouſly, without defeating their own Deſign, they ſeem to have reſolved, with exquiſite ſagacity, to make uſe of in ſucceſſion. The leading Principle taken by

§ Book II. Chap. 3. Page 49. ‖ Page 48.
* Book II. Chap. 3, 48, and 49. † Chap. VI. Page 66, 67. ‡ Chap. VII. Pages 73, 74.

by itſelf would be infallible for deſtroying the Syſtem then in being; and the various reſtrictions might be no leſs ſerviceable, when they ſhould have eſtabliſhed their own Syſtem, and wiſhed to defend it againſt thoſe who might aſſail them with their own Weapons.

I will not poſitively aſſert, that this was their preciſe mode of reaſoning; but, certain it is that ſuch has been their practice. We have beheld the firſt part of the Scheme; we have heard the Public Will declared ſupreme; we have ſeen its ſovereignty in perfect exerciſe, and we have ſhuddered at its horrid efficacy. We have now alſo witneſſed the latter part. We have heard the moſt diſtinguiſhed Revolutioniſts, eager no longer to demoliſh the power of others, but poſſeſſed of power themſelves, and anxious to retain it, declaiming againſt Anarchy and Inſubordination, inſulting by the moſt opprobrious epithets, what they had juſt before decked with the attributes of Majeſty; and determining on that very means of reſiſting popular violence, for which *La Fayette* had been proſcribed, and a deadly charge exhibited againſt their unfortunate King. We have ſeen Clubs and Aſſociations, the very nerves and ſinews of the Revolutionary Syſtem, indiſcriminately torn aſunder. We have ſeen the Sections of Paris, ſo lately had in honour, as the only viſible head of the unwieldy Sovereign, beaten down and trampled on. We have ſeen the Primary Aſſemblies, (the body of

of that ſame Sovereign) reſtricted and coerced, to enſure their concurrence with the predetermination of their nominal Servants but real Maſters. And we have ſeen this wonderful influence, compared with which, all that has ever been aſſerted by the moſt enraged Demagogues, of the power of a Britiſh Miniſter over the return of Repreſentatives at a general election, is a trifle, a ſhadow, a thing not to be named, we have ſeen this influence, I ſay, paſſively ſubmitted to, and the two-thirds of the Convention triumphantly reinſtated. In a word, we have ſeen the Empire of the many, ſink down, loaded with the Curſe of God and Man, into that Sea of Blood which its own Murders had produced; and we behold ariſen in its room, the dominion of the Philoſophic Few, cemented by intrigue, guarded by military force, and reſting on the inertneſs of an exhauſted people.

Yes, when the buſineſs was completely done; when the Revolutionary Comet had accompliſhed its diſaſtrous round, and had ſhook "from "its horrid hair," death, devaſtation, and havock, on every quarter of that doomed Country; when the Demons of envy and avarice had been glutted to ſatiety; when rank had been degraded, opulence pillaged, the ſocial fabrick overthrown, and its very foundations ploughed up; when *Patriots* once mendicant and meagre had grown ſleek with confiſcated abundance; and *Stateſmen*,

unknown before, or known only by the profligacy of their Pens, and the Proſtitution of their Talents, had riſen to the height of power, and fallen again as rapidly, undermined by more ſubtle villainy; and when at length all had known and felt that they had deadly weapons for each other, as well as for Royaliſts and Ariſtocrats; then and not before, they acknowledged the force of thoſe eternal truths, which common ſenſe and common honeſty might have taught them from the beginning. "Then," ſaith *Louvet*, (for it it impoſſible to find expreſſions more directly in point, or more clearly dictated by imperious conviction) "I was obliged to own that of "all ſpecies of ſlavery that which Anarchy pro- "duces is the moſt intolerable; for when it is the "ignorant and deceived multitude that reigns, "crimes multiply in proportion to the rulers." *

But mark the unwillingneſs of this confeſſion. Stretched and diſtorted as the mind of *Louvet* was on the rack of deſperate diſappointment, ſtill he utters with reluctance this equal dictate of his underſtanding and his feelings. And why? Becauſe he felt that in making ſuch an acknowledgment, he renounced what he had once held as the firſt of all Political truths; he felt that he renounced Democracy; that he gave up at once, what he and his brethren had contended for, at the expence of crimes unknown to the fierceſt nations, the

* See *Louvet's* Recital of his Perils.

the ruin of his Country and the riſk of the World. But having brought himſelf thus far, he does not ſtop; one extreme leads, by the laws of nature, to another; and *Louvet* indemnifies himſelf for his Democratick deluſion, by adopting a principle of the moſt outrageous Ariſtocracy. tocracy. " Oh why!" exclaims he, after an enumeration of horrors unparalleled in the annals of barbarity, " was nothing ſhort of this melan-
" choly experience ſufficient to convince me,
" that without diſtinction of poverty or opu-
" lence, of grandeur or obſcurity, I will even
" ſay in general of vain knowledge, or abſolute
" ignorance, and under the ſole exception of vir-
" tue, which appertains but to a few privileged
" philoſophers, men *ought to be Slaves*, becauſe
" they are either wicked themſelves, or are
" ready to crouch before the wicked?"

Did *Louvet* ſpeak thus from the mere impulſe of the hour, or did he alone hold this opinion? He has taken care to convince us that neither was the caſe. The ſhort paſſage from the then unpubliſhed manuſcript of Madame *Roland*, which ſtands as a Motto on his title page, and which conveys preciſely the ſame ſentiments, only in a milder and more plaintive tone, proves both that *Louvet* was not ſingular in the doctrine he had embraced, and that he conſidered it not only as incontrovertible, but as a moſt important truth. " Righteous Heaven," ſays ſhe, " illuminate this wretch-

" ed people for whom I desire liberty. Liberty !
" Ah ! it is for exalted spirits who despise death,
" and who know when it is right to inflict it. It is
" not for those corrupted men, who emerging
" from the bed of debauchery, or the mire of in-
" digence, rush forward to bathe in the blood
" which flows from from the scaffolds. It is for
" a wise people who cherish humanity, practise
" justice, despise flatterers, know their true
" friends, and respect truth. So long as you are
" not such a people, oh ! my fellow Citizens, in
" vain will you talk about liberty. You can
" only have a licentiousness, to which each of
" you will fall a victim in his turn ; you will ask
" for bread, and they will give you dead bodies ;
" and you will finish by being enslaved."

Now, was there ever such a people as Madame *Roland* here declares to be alone fit for liberty ? Was there ever an instance of the numerical multitude in any full grown community being wise, humane, and just, despising flatterers, knowing their real friends, and respecting truth ? Or is it imaginable that mankind in the mass can be any other than that weak, sensual, passionate thing, which she describes, and which she pronounces to be utterly incapable of liberty ? What then is the result of Madame Roland's doctrine ? evidently that liberty is only for society, as, in populous states at least, it never was, nor ever can be ; and that in the mean time, men may talk

talk of liberty, but cannot poſſibly enjoy it; they may create licentiouſneſs, but muſt themſelves be ſlaves.

That the leaders of the Jacobin party were always of this opinion can ſcarcely be doubted; and when the Girondiſts, once the only real Republicans in France, had alſo adopted it, it is not ſtrange that the affairs of that country ſhould have aſſumed their preſent form and colour. It is eaſy to ſee that this doctrine furniſhes a complete clue to all the proceedings of the Convention during the formation of the new Legiſlature. When they were convinced that man is incapable of liberty, and that the few philoſophers being alone poſſeſſed of virtue, were alone qualified to poſſeſs power, and when they were no leſs certain that they themſelves were the privileged few, their civiſm united with their ambition to engage them by every means to perpetuate their own ſupremacy, and to reduce the people to that impotence which alone befitted the weakneſs and the wickedneſs of their nature.

And it is but juſtice to acknowledge, that after what they had done in the firſt inſtance, ſome ſuch procedure was unavoidable. In order to achieve their primary object, they had turned their country into one great Bedlam; and frenzy

frenzy, once excited, is not to be reaſoned down. Men in their ſenſes may be led by argument, but Maniacs muſt be chained. A ſevere diſcipline was neceſſary to reſtore the philoſophers themſelves to their underſtanding; but when this was once effected, the principle of ſelf preſervation alone, was ſufficient to produce what followed. They were convinced by arguments which addreſſed all their ſenſes at once, that ſociety could not exiſt without Government; and common ſenſe pointed out that the ſtrength of a government muſt be increaſed in proportion to the licentiouſneſs of thoſe to be governed. In a word they felt that the politicks of *Machiavel* furniſhed the only antidote for the poiſon of *Rouſſeau*, and they yielded to the conviction with the impetuoſity of Frenchmen.

But in allowing the ſuitableneſs of the new French principles to the circumſtances of that wretched country, let it not be imagined that I acknowledge their general truth. After all that *Louvet* and his brethern can ſay, there is no general neceſſity for man being either Tyrant or Slave. Deſperate diſeaſes in the ſocial as well as in the natural body may require ſeverity of regimen; and no diſeaſe incident to ſociety, can be more dreadful than the diſſolution of all order, and the uncontrouled dominion of the frantic multitude. In this caſe the only adequate remedy

medy is the equally unlimited authority of One or of a Few. Rome, even in its beſt days, was ſubject to occaſional paroxyſms of Anarchy, and the temporary deſpotiſm of a dictator was the ſtated reſource. But ſtill the ſocial body is capable of health as well as ſickneſs; and we are authoriſed to aſſert that rational liberty is as ſuitable to the former, as rigorous reſtraint is to the latter. We have learned this comfortable truth from the actual and long experience of our own moſt happy Conſtitution; under which, with the moſt ample ſcope for the exerciſe of reaſon, the indulgence of peculiarity, and the very ſportiveneſs of whim, effectual means have ever been at hand, for the protection of perſon and property, as well from the attacks of undue power on the part of the rulers, as from the depredations of individuals, or the madneſs of a mob.

But one cannot help enquiring how thoſe of our own country who have affected to deſpiſe Britiſh Liberty, and have been ſo long beſtowing invidious praiſes on French politics and French patriotiſm, will reliſh theſe new doctrines. Will they put their intellects to the torture in order to reconcile flat contradictions, and deviſe theories to ſhew how the ſame men at the ſame time may hold the neceſſity of Univerſal Slavery and yet be labouring to eſtabliſh Univerſal Liberty? Or will

will they fairly give up their apoſtate brethren; and ſend out their fancies to circumnavigate the Globe, in hope of finding "ſome happier Iſland "in the watry waſte," where the viſion of Democracy may yet be realized?

It is aſtoniſhing with what pertinacity men ſometimes reſiſt the evidence of truth. Common ſagacity alone might have taught before hand that a popular revolution was of all imaginable expedients the leaſt likely to produce rational liberty. it might have been ſeen without the aid of experiment, that ſuch a revolution muſt neceſſarily imply a diſſolution of all law and government; that law and government being once deſtroyed, anarchy with all its horrors muſt ſucceed; that ſociety could not long exiſt in ſuch a ſtate; that at length any government would appear preferable to none; that thoſe who ſhould happen to ſtand higheſt, be they who they might, whether they had been thrown up by accident, or raiſed by their own villainy, whether, as Madame Roland ſays, they had emerged from the mine of indigence, or crept from the bed of debauchery, that theſe would graſp the reins, and when they had ſeized them, would be impelled alike by the natural love of power, and by the exigencies of the country, to manage them with all the rigidneſs of Deſpotiſm; ſo that after a courſe of blood and devaſtation, of private and of public miſery, the

the only termination that reaſon could expect, would be the very point, or ſomething worſe than the very point from which the buſineſs had commenced.

And let it not be thought that a ſucceſsful mode of conducting revolutions can be learned from experience, or that the miſcarriages in one may poſſibly be corrected in the next that occurs. Common ſenſe alone will teach any man, who is not deaf to its ſuggeſtions, that when once the cement of ſociety is diſſolved, and general inſurrection carried ſucceſsfully into practice, reſiſtance, management, and direction are totally at an end. Every future movement is at the mercy of accident. The power which is at work is as irreſiſtible as the mountain torrent, and the directing principle as verſatile as the whirlwind. Wiſdom may ſeek to convince, or eloquence to charm; but one only influence can be built upon as certain, the magnetick attraction of ſuperior villainy.

" I had ſeen men, !" ſaith the ſame *Louvet* " in a body in their public life, and had de- " teſted them. I had reaſon to know them " too well individually in their private life, and " hatred was changed into contempt; ſince even " in a country which I thought about to be " regenerated, the good are ſo puſillanimous,

" and the wicked ſo violent, that every aggre-
" gate of men, pompouſly called the *People*,
" by fools like me, is in reality but a feeble
" herd, happy to crouch to a maſter, whether it
" be a *Robeſpierre* or a *Maſſaniello*, a *Marat* or
" a *Nero*."

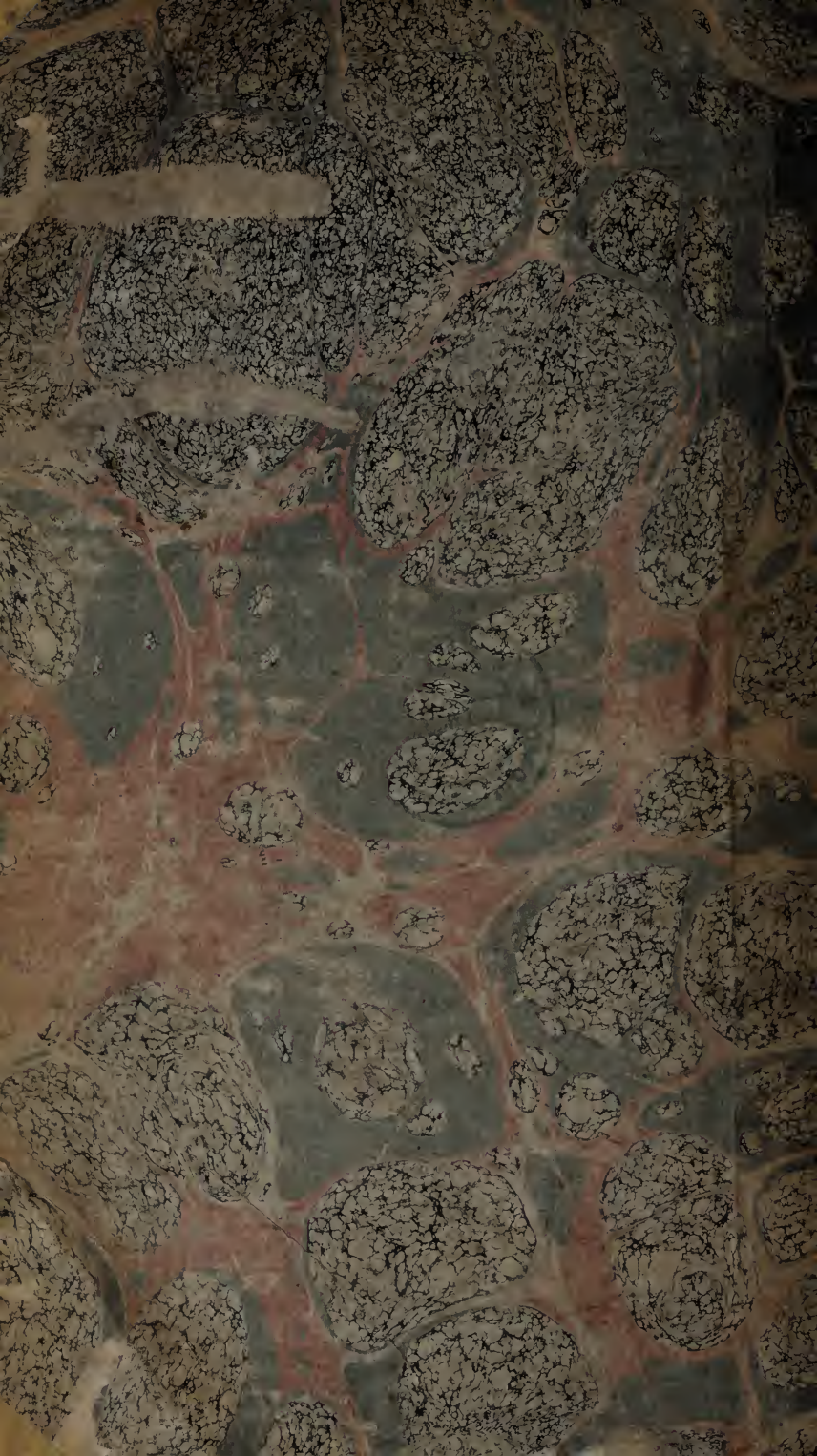
What then have the French gained by reſorting to a popular revolution? Have they gained rational liberty? No; their preſent rulers pronounce them to be incapable of it, and only to be fit ſlaves. Have they gained wealth, happineſs, or peace? Alas! many years muſt revolve before their country will recover what it has loſt. " Our manufactures," ſaith the " moſt eloquent of their orators, " are languiſh-
" ing, our maritime trade is deſtroyed; whilſt
" our victories render us illuſtrious abroad, diſ-
" order ſhakes the very foundation of ſociety at
" home."* What, I aſk then have they gained? They have gained what every large country muſt gain in ſimilar circumſtances; they have gained miſery in all its forms, they have gained a load of guilt, at which nature ſhudders, they have gained a rigid and deſpotick government, the higheſt praiſe of which is that it is better than no government at all, for the continuance of which there is no ſecurity, and againſt whoſe incroachments there is no one poſſible remedy, but a recurrence to that deſperate expedient found already to be even

* See Eſſay IV.

even worſe than the diſeaſe, *General Inſurrection.*

If then the bloody Drama of the French revolution were to be acted over again, can we imagine that the men who make theſe acknowledgements would ſupport the ſame characters, and exhibit the ſame conduct as before? Would *Louvet*, after having diſcovered that every aggregate of men is a feeble herd, and that therefore they ought to be ſlaves, again proclaim the ſovereignty of the Popular Will, and again utter that pompous nonſenſe, for which he here pronounces himſelf and his brethren *fools*? Would *Boiſſy D'Anglas*, after being convinced that that country only where "men of property "govern, is in a ſtate of ſociety, and that that "where men without property govern is in "a ſtate of nature," * return once more to the naked Rights of Man, and the rule of the numerical multitude? Would *Pelet*, after deploring that for "five years paſt they had been op-"preſſed and ſeverely ſmarted, and that the "erroneous ſyſtem of their political economy "was the ſource of all their ſufferings," have recourſe a ſecond time to the ſame economy, and retrace that career of calamity, from the retroſpect of which he revolts with horror? Shall

* Report to the Commiſſion from the Committee of Conſtitution 23d of June, 1795.

we then who have witneſſed both their conduct and its conſequences, and who now hear their extorted acknowledgments receive no benefit from ſo inſtructive an example ? We have thoſe amongſt *us* alſo, who would willingly precipitate their country into the ſame extremity of wretchedneſs, and who would as certainly ſeek a remedy for that wretchedneſs in the ſame deſperate expedients. Let us then, keep perpetually in view the whole horrors of that ſyſtem which is not more hateful for the anarchy with which it commences, than for the degrading deſpotiſm to which it neceſſarily leads. Let the happy Conſtitution which ſecures us equally from both theſe evils riſe in our eſtimation in proportion to the miſeries which we ſee others ſuffer, and the genuine liberty—the ſafety both of perſon and property, which we and our fathers have uninterruptedly enjoyed; and let it be the object of our moſt active vigilance and zeal, to tranſmit to our lateſt poſterity, this invaluable inheritance, preſerved alike inviolate from the frenzy of enthuſiaſts, and the malignity of traitors.

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